■ Lifestyle
Bayanihan dances way to Olympics

■ Lifestyle
Allan Casio: Nude and natural

■ Business / A5
Small players hike gasoline prices today

■ Entertainment
Complaint vs Mother Lily probed

Dancing the Bayani / A20
Pambansal sa usang: Kung 'di bagong bawis, ano?
NINA A 21 / TV/TEXT 2015

**AFP wants to exhume body of bandit leader**

TO: DEPED, all doubts that Pentagon Kidlat gang leader Alzate Tabir is dead, why not re-bury his body?

The military raised the possibility yesterday after the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) disputed official accounts that Tabir was among the at least 31 Pentagon members killed in an Air Force bombardment of their suspected hide-

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

**'Fastest' judge among 6 Gender justice awardees**

By Gil Donato Dumo
PDI St. Justin Bureau

MANILA, Philippines—The country's "fastest" judge is among six recipients of the first Gender Justice Awards.

e-mail feedback@inquirer.com.ph | Monday, August 16, 2004 | 36 pages | vol. 19 | no. 250 | website: www.inq7.net

# ₱2M offered for info on media murders

## *Journalists to wear black in Crame rally today*

By Yolanda Garcia-Fuentes
PDI Watcher's Luzon Bureau
and TJ Burgonio

A HUGE cash reward might do the trick this time.

A ₱2-million reward has been offered by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. to anyone who can give information that will lead to the arrest of those who participated in the recent killings of journalists.

In Ilocos, a journalist in his younger days, said P500,000 would come from his pocket, P500,000 from his pork barrel and P1 million from the pooled funds of his colleagues in the House of Representatives.

"I hope to find all of these (killings) will come to [an end]," said the Speaker, who had worked for the Asia, the first news service agency in Asia, as a reporter and later wrote a syndicated column for The Philippines Herald before 1972.

At least six Filipino journalists have been killed this year, four of them gunned down in a span of two weeks. All of them were working for print and broadcast media organizations based in the provinces.

Since the Edsa Revolution in 1986, 79 journalists have been killed, but only one perpetrator, a policeman, has been convicted and jailed, according to data gathered by Inquirer Research. See related stories on Pages A2 and A19.1

De Venecia's offer is the biggest reward for the capture of the killers of journalists.

On Nov. 7, 2003, President Macapagal-Arroyo "committed P1 million as a reward for the solution of the killings of media practitioners over the past five years."

No one has collected the reward.

In Turbo, former President Corazon Aquino said the rash of killings of journalists was "disturbing."

"(Others) was never afraid to inform the public of the truth and I am sure he would be devastated by what was happening right now," said the widow of Edsa demigod "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., a reporter of

FIRST RP WIN
FILIPINO'S Roman Reis (right) presses the attack on Patrick Bagare of Sweden when he beat, 41-31, in their preliminary Olympic welterweight fight last night at the Peristeri Boxing Hall in Athens. Reis, who came out of retirement to qualify for his third Olympics, needs three more wins to advance to the medal round. (See Page A31.)

## Bible, shaving kit for NPA captives

By Christian V. Esguerra
and Carlos Pedlar

STILBO: Six rescues welcome track drivers bagelo de la Cruz got, three will be on parties and six brass bands awaiting for them when Lt. Ronaldo "Butch" Palileo and Pfc. Daniel Benardo come home, hopefully within the next 48 hours.

Just a big fan, a warm embrace, their favorite dishes, a Bible ... and a shaving kit.

"Butch is not the type who likes big parties," Palileo's wife Leah told the Inquirer yesterday. "He's happy just being with the people he loves."

Captured during a gun battle in Cotacotes last on Feb. 28, the two Isla key Philippine army soldiers have been held captive somewhere around or near Bicol for nearly six months by New People's Army guerrillas.

A temporary ceasefire agreement between the government and the NPA has cleared the way for their release within 72 hours, starting at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, negotiators said.

Why, celebrating Eid'

It's because they have been in captivity for so long that one of them has grown a Jesus-like beard.

Leah last communicated with her husband at around 7 p.m. on Feb. 29. Palileo

## No sacred cows in pork probe, says Ombudsman

By Arnaud M. Hacart

ABRA: unusual calls for the scrapping of the pork barrel, the Office of the Ombudsman has ordered that the public fund will be up subpoenaed in its investigation of the alleged misuse of the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF).

One case of alleged misuse of the pork barrel involves about P26 million in the PDAF of Rep. Claude Bautista, who allegedly deposited the bulk of the money intended for the Di House of the Philippines (GSP)-Cebu into her private bank account.

Another congressman, who is from Mindanao, is also being investigated by the Office of the Ombudsman for misusing his pork barrel.

Martinez allegedly used the GSP in Cebu, which she and her daughter were serving as accounting officers, as a "conduit" so she could claim the money for herself in 2002. The money was released in three tranches—two in 2000 and one in 2001.

Contacted by phone on Friday Martinez, a member of the administration party and representative of the fourth district of Cebu, described the issue as "hogwash."

"That's nonsense. I've been cleared by

## RP finance sleuth stalks terrorists

MANILA: Against parents an observer front of the war on terror in the Philippines, fighting alongside a platoon of security.

Working in a secluded wing of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas complex, Anzino and his Anti-Money Laundering Council double pore over reams of wire transfers, trying to isolate the drug dealers, kidnappers and paranoid schemers who finance Philippine bandit groups.

They are also "looking into" the accounts of entities suspected as conduits of terrorist funds. Aquino declines to discuss specific cases.

"But we obtain a lot of info, gain value," he told Agence France-Presse in an interview. "We are up against money launderers, organized crime groups and even financiers of terrorists."

The 40-member staff oversees daily

NATIONAL MARIAN YEAR

School children sing the many during the closing of the National Marian Year and the International Eucharistic Year at the Placido L. Mapa Jr. Amphitheater in Manila. The event was also marked by the Papal Nuncio Rev. Antonio Franco, who urged Catholics to renew and strengthen their faith in Christ and their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. (See story on Page A3)

## Former 'Singing Nun' offers songs of hope

By Veli Contreras

HE MAKES hope come alive with the sound of music.

Not unlike Maria in that famous musical, the pastor per "free-spirited" composer-songwriter left the convent after more than a decade as a nun. Well into her second secular life, Carmen "Pinky" Valdes has answered a new calling.

She married a serious suitor two years ago and figured it was God's way of urging her to touch more lives with her gifts, by helping people in pain.

And so, minus the habit, Valdes is back as a minister. Following the help of singing talents from Amazing Jam Session students at Assumption College, Valdes produced a CD titled "Sandalwood," featuring 13 original songs of comfort and inspiration.

Proceeds from all CD sales and from a concert launch tomorrow, 8:30 p.m., at the Peninsula Hotel Manila, will go to charity.

"In like the sandalwood which perfumes the ax that wounds it," Valdes told the Inquirer last week in Quezon City, quoting an old Spanish proverb about the fragrance tree that inspired the title track.

"Enough of the feeling depressed and putting people down," said Valdes, who's no loner from her job as vice president for human resources of a company in San Francisco, California. "We have to help our society and people in suffering. They need a voice of hope."

She explained, "I wasn't born to understand one thing, which is very critical. People usually think that when they are suffering, my voice means hope because they will get well soon. Hope is different from that. Hope means finding a meaning to the suffering even if we don't get well."

Valdes has a master's degree in theology and also writes poetry. Her songs are poetry set to melodies. For example, "Lift Your Face to the Rain," invites listeners to reflect: "Don't you know it takes like to make gold? And the night must fall before the stars appear?; Don't you know pearls are made out of sand? And a seed must die to let a flower live?"

She makes it easy to believe her account that recording engineer David McElhaney was moved to tears when working on "Sandalwood" at the

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2005

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

# After oil price hikes, higher interest rates seen to jolt economy

By Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.

ALREADY reeling from the series of oil price hikes, the Philippine economy is likely to be jolted by an interest rate shock as rising US interest rates inevitably jack up government debt payments and increase the cost of borrowings.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and Congress meet- ing separately this week could cripple the economy, which is already saddled by escalating crude oil prices which have reached new historic highs in recent weeks.

- BSP governor veterans head Amo Tetangco told The Inquirer that the move of the US Federal Reserve Board to raise interest rates and the outlook for more rate increases in the coming months have made it more imperative for the government to get additional sources of revenue.

The US fed rate is used as the benchmark rate for international borrowings and a higher rate automatically translates to higher interest payments for the country's budget debt.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, who is also a member of the Senior Management Group, said the US Fed's move to hike interest rates (from 1 percent to 1.5 percent in less than two months would add P9 billion in additional interest expenses to the government's budget.

The US Fed plans to raise its rates to contain inflation in the growing economy.

With most economic experts expecting the US Fed to raise interest rates by as much as 100 basis points to 2.5 percent by 2005, Salceda said the government should prepare for an additional P18 billion in terms of interest payments.

With 95 percent or P575.467 billion of this year's budget already earmarked for debt servicing, the government can hardly afford more interest expenses at this time.

Salceda said the twin shocks of rising oil prices and interest rates have increased the pressure on the Arroyo administration to get Congress to agree to its P88 billion tax reform package centered on the imposition of a P2 per liter oil tax.

He noted that while opposition to the President's tax reform measures have been mounting, the head problem has worsened due to negative external factors that are out of our hands.

"Without new revenues, the increases in debt service may lead to disruptions in demand for business and to supply for consumers," Salceda said.

BSP Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura earlier said that necessary adjustments would have to assess the situation in the event the US Fed takes its interest rates.

Buenaventura said it may not be necessary for the BSP to follow the increase in US Fed rates and likewise raise its key policy rates since the market has adjusted itself.

Monetary authorities usually match the move by the US Fed to prevent capital flight as investors usually put them in assets or- tries that offer higher interest rates.

The BSP has kept its key policy rates unchanged for 18 months now. Its overnight borrowing rate has remained at 6.5 percent while its overnight lending rate is at 8 percent.

An increase in BSP's key rates would tighten the money supply and raise the cost of borrowing. This, in turn, affects economic growth as companies shy away from borrowing money to finance their expansion programs.

Aside from the US Fed rate hike, another factor that would prompt the BSP to raise its key policy rates are the rising oil prices which have pushed up the prices of goods and services to record levels.

Higher oil prices had raised the country's inflation rate to 6 percent in July, the highest level in almost three years.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION. President Arroyo shows off the icons depicting schoolrooms that was presented to her as a gift by the officials and alumnae of Assumption College, represented by Judy Araneta-Roxas (left), during the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Assumption yesterday in Makati city. STORY ON PAGE A-8

ASUS
INSPIRATION PCs

Introducing the ASUS L4R

The Only Notebook you'll ever Need

0% interest on 12 months on any credit card

Php 7,491 / MARRY*

L4 series

Php 79,900 Php 99,900 Php 85,000

ASUS SERVICE CENTERS

TREND MICRO

# House completes allocation of panel chairmanships

By Cai Ileto Pobre

AFTER weeks of jockeying for juicy chairmanships by members of the House, the lower chamber has finally completed its reorganization, except for two panels—the Committee on Appropriations and the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal, all committee chairmanships and vice-chairmanships have been filled up.

House Majority floor Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) described the reorganization as having complied with the Speaker's instruction to give each political party what it deserves in "proportional representation."

"Everybody is happy," Nograles said.

The dominant Lakas-CMD, the biggest political party, got 30 committee chairmanships and at least 60 vice-chairmanships.

The Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) 13 chairmanships and at least 16 vice-chairmanships.

The Nacionalista Party got two committee chairmanships and at least 12 vice-chairmanships.

The party list bloc bagged four committee chairmanships and at least 24 vice-chairmanships.

The proposed 100 senators still be subject to hearings by the house committee on ways and means.

# Soldier killed, 3 others hurt in clash with Abus

ZAMBASAGA—Government troops clashed Sunday with the Abu Sayyaf Group members in Jolo, leaving one soldier dead and up to six others from both sides wounded, the military said.

Troops caught up with the Abu Sayyaf gunmen near the town of Indanan, triggering the gun battle, said military spokesman Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero.

Lucero said one soldier was killed, while three others were wounded. Three rebels were believed wounded in the firefight, according to messages intercepted over rebel radios.

"There could be more enemy casualties, but initial military reports said one government soldier was killed. Three soldiers and three rebels were wounded in the fighting," Lucero said.

"The operation is going on and we are still awaiting reports from our combat forces," he added.

The Abu Sayyaf is considered a terrorist group by the US and Philippine governments and was blamed for the kidnapping deaths of two Americans in 2002.

Last week, a court in the southern Philippines sentenced to death 27 Abu Sayyaf members who raided a hospital and a church compound on the island of Basilan in 2000. AFP

# Nat'l Marian Year, Int'l Eucharistic Year launched

By Jo Clemente
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*

TARLAC CITY—The Papal Nuncio Rev. Antonio Franco officiated at a concelebrated Mass here yesterday launching National Marian Year and the International Eucharistic Year.

In his message, Franco urged Catholics across the country to renew and strengthen their faith in Christ and their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary to heal the wounds of society. *(See photo on Page A1.)*

"We need the saving power of Jesus for renewal and conversion, and we should seek and search for Mary so she can lead us to Jesus to heal the wounds that still affect our person, our lives and our behavior," he said.

Franco noted that even the Catholic Church needed renewal and conversion because "we are made of human beings—the bishops, the priests, the lay people. Society needs to be healed. Good has to prevail and we have to promote justice and the well-being of the people," he said.

Former President Corazon Aquino, who is from Tarlac, attended the mass and the early morning praying of the rosary.

She was impressed with Angela Villanueva, a six-year-old Grade 1 pupil of a public school here, who led the praying of the last decade of the rosary.

Aquino said it was good to see children praying and urged parents to teach their children how to pray at an early age.

The National Marian Year started yesterday, which was also the Feast of the Assumption, and ends on Dec. 8, 2005, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the papal definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

It coincides with the launch of the International Eucharistic Year as declared by Pope John Paul II, which starts in October this year and ends in October 2005.

The theme of the dual celebration is "Celebrating the Eucharist with Mary."

To celebrate the Marian year here, Tarlac Bishop Florentino Cinense declared 20 areas in the province, such as the Our Lady of Sorrows in Capas town and the Our Lady of Peace in La Paz town, as pilgrim sites.

# PAL women sue over early retirement

By Michael Lim Ubac

IN A landmark class suit expected to test gender equality in the country, female cabin attendants of Philippine Airlines have asked a Makati court to declare as "patently unconstitutional" the airline policy that compels them to retire five years earlier than their male counterparts.

The gravity of the case compelled the Makati Regional Trial Court on Aug. 10 to assume jurisdiction over it and issue a temporary restraining order against PAL, effective for 20 days.

Judge Ma. Cristina J. Cornejo, presiding officer of Makati RTC Branch 147 ordered PAL—for the moment—not to implement its policy which compels cabin attendants to retire at age 55 for females and 60 for males.

The hearing on the flight attendants' application for preliminary injunction is set for Aug. 25.

"There is no reasonable, much less lawful, basis for Philippine Airlines to distinguish, differentiate or classify cabin attendants on the basis of sex and thereby arbitrarily set a lower compulsory retirement age for petitioners for the sole reason that they are women," argued lawyer Lorna Patajo-Kapunan.

Kapunan, senior partner at the Roco, Kapunan, Migallos, Perez & Luna Law Offices, is the lead counsel for the Flight Attendants and Stewards Association of the Philippines (FASAP), a labor organization certified as the sole and exclusive bargaining representative of the flight attendants, flight stewards and pursers (collectively called cabin attendants) of PAL.

But PAL, through lawyer Rodello P. Buado, associate counsel for the Lucio Tan Group of Companies, questioned the jurisdiction of the court over the issue.

Buado claimed that all controversies involving employer-employee relations would fall within the jurisdiction of the labor tribunals and agencies.

But the court sustained the argument of petitioners' counsel that "unless it be shown that a particular subject matter is, by law, lodged with another body, this Honorable Court retains jurisdiction," said lawyer Lester Alvarado Flores, co-counsel for the cabin attendants.

The petitioners, led by Patricia Halaguena, decried their treatment by PAL as "flying GROs" (guest relations officers) whose value on the job decreases proportionately with age. On the contrary, they said, experience enables them to better perform their tasks as inflight safety and service officers.

Unlike the more progressive airlines in the United States and Europe that have even sexagenarian cabin attendants, PAL persistently clings to the "old, sexist stereotype of stewardesses as young and attractive entertainers in the sky," they said.

Distributed by Newspaper Direct

WOW!
MAGIC SING
PREMIUM
The No.1
Videoke Microphone

The Best in Videoke Entertainment!
Videoke Anytime, Anywhere!

MAGIC SING PREMIUM ADVANTAGES:

- With 55 WOWPHILIPPINES Picture Backgrounds
- With RECORD & PLAYBACK Function
- With Free Mic Stand, One Year Warranty and Lifetime Service
- All-Original & All-Imported from KOREA
- Duly Licenced Songs
- TAGALOG 3 & 4 Song Chips PRICE DROP!
- WOW TAGALOG Song Chip NOW AVAILABLE!

Proud to Promote Philippine Tourism!

A Collection of 500 Favorite Songs!

WATCH!
THE NATIONWIDE SEARCH FOR THE
SINGING LOLO N LOLA
Aug. 16 - Sept. 12, 2004 at SM Supermalls
Presented by: WOW MAGIC SING PREMIUM

AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE AT:

odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO Hotline:(02) 687-3597
Automatic CENTRE Hotline:(02) 927-8747
AstroVision Hotline:(02) 920-1542
ABENSON Hotline:(02) 636-6017
WESTERN Hotline:(02) 636-4210
MUSIC VIDEO Hotline:(02) 868-1090
Home & Office Center Hotline:(02) 912-6606
STARBOOKS Hotline:(02) 633-1731
Avid BEST BRANDS! Hotline:(02) 643-1641 loc. 708

Metro Manila Dealers:
Solid Electronics • Pacific Electronics • Armstrong • Knight Audio Room • WEM Marketing • Hirosa • Ohm's Trader • Fair N' Square • Ample • ALFOX Audio Video • E. Rodriguez Electronics • Viewplus Appliance • Assurance • J&R • Richland Electronics • Image Video • Megamax • Flights • Earl Toy World • Shop Manila • VMZ Business Center • Belden Mktng. • Jans Appliances • Buy Smart • Presound • Listening Room • Listening Style • Golden Sound • Victronics Computers, Inc. • Sound Quest Electronic Center • Sights & Sounds • Bethel Marketing • Spectra • Balcap • Yamaha School of Music • RJ Music Center • Wilsonic Marketing • A Plus A

Provincial Dealers:
NORTH - Tiongson Department Store • TSB Bazaar • Audio Mix • BCS Music Center • Guanzon Merchandising Corp. • SHF Appliances • Savers Mart • Consumers Appliance Traders • CGI Appliance Center • Adilessa Corporation • Joy's Radio Center & Record Bar • Ocampos Angeles • Ocampos Mega Store
VISAYAS & MINDANAO - Echo Appliance • Reverb • Bohol Quality • Asias Home • Eco-tech • Cebu Appliance • Appliance Centrum • Lapse's Department Store • Pos Marketing • Rosabel General Merchandise • OK Dept. Store • Better Living Appliance Center • Willy & Sons • Aben Marketing • People's Marketing • Thesson's Marketing • GC Appliance Corp. • Victoria Dept. Store • Sinlitz Consumer Electronics • Simosa Marketing Corporation • Mindanao Solidmark Inc.

Exclusively Distributed by:
in-a-jiffy and G2K CORPORATION
www.magicnic.com

# Widow reminds media groups of unlisted victim

By Dethi T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—"Who is this? Is name not on the list of murdered media expatriots?"

That was the very first question Bonifacia Lingan, 73, asked the moment the reporter met with her yesterday for an interview. She is the widow of Enrique "Ike" Lingan, a hard-hitting radio commentator and reporter who was killed on Feb. 4, 1990.

A total of 55 journalists have been murdered since press freedom was supposedly restored in the country after the Marcos regime was toppled in 1986, according to the records of different media groups.

For Bonifacia, the non-inclusion of her husband's name in the list of media people killed in the country is not easy to accept.

"Maybe they just missed his name," she said. She wondered whether the recent deaths of her husband or the hands of a policeman was investigated and brought to the personal knowledge of media workers.

"My ike was true to his chosen profession when he was still alive. He was hot-headed but was fair in his reporting and commentaries," Bonifacia said in Filipino in her hotel near an abandoned airport in Barangay Bukang Liwayway here.

Court records showed that on the evening of Feb. 4, 1990, Ike, together with two other local radio reporters, were in a nightclub following reports that a mas-shooting took them to.

When a scantily clad dancer appeared on stage and began to perform a strip act, one of Ike's companions brought out his camera and took a picture. That angered the club's floor manager and bouncer, who immediately accosted and pushed the photographer.

Sensing trouble, Ike's group decided to leave and file a complaint at the police station.

## Police drinking at station

Shortly after they arrived at the station, the floor manager and the bouncer incited up and talked with a policeman, Felipe Saturno, who was then having a drink with his colleagues while on duty.

It turned out that the manager was related to the police officer. So, instead of entertaining the complaint, Saturno pushed one of Ike's companions to the wall and with a cocked gun threatened to shoot the reporter.

At this point, Ike intervened and reminded himself. But Saturno turned and pistol-whipped him. He fell to the floor, blood flowing down his face.

He tried to get up, but Saturno floored him with a blow to the forehead. He was rushed to the hospital but died from his head injuries.

Media practitioners staged rallies to protest the killing. Saturno was sentenced to up to 14 years and 8 months in prison. He is still serving his term in Muntinlupa.

"When someone reported to me that Saturno was living out unless he was supposed to serve in jail, somewhere by west to Bilibid with borrowed money for bail, I made sure that he was still there," Ike's widow said. "The prison officials assured me that they will not let him out until the court tells them to do so."

## Washing clothes

That I can't forgive him even if he lis-

BONIFACIA Lingan, 73, looks on as the only remaining personal mementos of her late commentator husband are the plaque of her husband Ike, a hard-hitting radio commentator in Quezon.

tens to my complaints. Harassment is the only thing I've got in this world," she said.

Bonifacia said she just wanted media groups to correct their list and include the name of her husband. "Ike's memory was my only remaining treasure in life."

Some of her memorabilia kept from a local cultural center, including a photograph of Ike were destroyed by typhoons.

She advised news reporters to always observe the ethics of the profession.

"And if they can avoid not to be hurt the target of their news and exposés. It's much better for that too many families of media men will cry again and be left alone to fend for themselves," she said, holding back tears.

In their 32 years of companionship, they remained childless.

Bonifacia manages to survive by washing clothes for some rich families in the city. Once a week, she distributes complimentary copies of a local newspaper to business establishments and government offices in the public market.

"That's FREE, and that means a lot to an old woman like me," she said.

# P2M offered for info on media murders

Previous page A1

The Manila Times who covered the Norman Mar in the 1960s.

The former senator was murdered on Aug. 21, 1983, on his return from self-exile in the United States.

## Wear black

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) has enlisted reporters to join a rally and "wear black today to protest the alleged failure of the police and judiciary to solve the cases of slain journalists over the past 18 years.

The NUJP, which is leading other media organizations in a picket this morning at the national police headquarters in Camp Crame in Quezon City, said this failure to convict suspects in the killings had spawned a "climate of impunity" against journalists.

"Only by re-opening the cases can we overcome the failure of the police and judiciary to solve these killings," Inday Espina-Varona, NUJP chair, said in a statement e-mailed to journalists.

"Please wear black on Monday, whether you will attend the pickets or not. This is our small way of mourning the deaths of our colleagues and expressing outrage over the killings," she added.

Varona described the period between July 31 and Aug. 13—during which four broadcast journalists were gunned down—as the "worst two weeks" for press freedom in the Philippines.

Six journalists have been killed this year, one short of the highest number recorded in 1986, which is also the highest annual death toll.

"The failure by the authorities to solve the killings over the years is astounding. Not even President Arroyo's directive to the PNP chief Director Hermogenes Ebdane to probe these murders has any produced any positive results," Varona said.

Justice Undersecretary Merceditas Gutierrez, agreed with Varona, saying the authorities' failure to solve cases only emboldened people who hold grudges against journalists to make good their threats to harm them.

## Serious steps

Varona lamented that the police considered a case solved after they had identified the suspect and filed the charges against him in the courts, "no matter if the case was still pending or if the suspect was still at large."

"This is not only misleading—it marks the justice system and the suffering of the families and friends of our fallen colleagues," she said.

Chief Supt. Leo Gobius, national police spokesperson, took exception to NUJP's claims, saying that the national police has been taking serious steps to crack down on killings those involving journalists.

In the wake of the killings, he said the police quickly formed Task Force Newsmen, spearheaded by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, to investigate follow-ups on the cases.

"We're trying to solve cases. We don't stop; we're pursuing cases. It just so happened that these are media killings. Those are woefully planned crimes," Gobius said in a press interview.

The police hierarchy is also pursuing to hold a dialogue with officials of the NUJP and other media organizations either after today's picket or tomorrow to discuss their concerns, according to Gobius.

## Firearms

For the protection of journalists, especially those receiving death threats, Ebdane had suggested that they be issued firearms.

But De Venecia said the decision to arm journalists should be left to journalists and media organizations.

"We cannot dictate on you, it will have to be your own voluntary decision," De Venecia told the NUJP.

The Speaker said the spate of killings was a threat to press freedom. "What they kill media representatives, that's a direct assault on press freedom in the country. They want to frighten you from exposing corruption and misbehavior in the provinces, cities and towns," he said.

But Joaquin Bernas, SJ, said it is impossible to give protection to "incorrigible or their enemies of locality" fiends, who also have a reputation to protect, according to De Venecia, who holds a BS Journalism degree from the Ateneo de Manila University.

"You cannot hold me responsible for anybody in the practice of their profession, he said.

He added: public servants to be responsible and never to be abusive to avoid being criticized by the media.

"Members of the media should be responsible, should be moderate and not be abusive in the same way that public servants must not be abusive. Everything must be balanced, balanced, balanced. That is the key," he said.

Journalists joining today's picket rally to be attributed to assemble in front of the Bulletin Tower on Doña Aurora Armando Street in Quezon City at around 9 a.m.

NUJP chapters and other media groups in the provinces are also holding their own rallies today.

In Central Luzon City, journalists will hold a memorade at around 8:30 a.m. It will be led by the newly formed Task Force Media and the local NUJP.

Media practitioners in the city agreed during a meeting late last night to wear black T-shirts or black arm band to mourn the slayings of dzRH Baguio Radio commentator Bonifacio Ilagan and DWA Super Radyo reporter Joe Bagtas.

The wives of the two slain newsmen said they would be attending the rally to ask another five to exert more effort to arrest the suspects in the killings.

In search of a clue tagged in the death of a journalist in Central Luzon City, the National Bureau of Investigation has decided to tap the surveillance equipment of international betting champion Manny Pacquiao.

After appeals for it to stop into the investigation of the shooting of radio reporter Jonathan Abejuro a week ago, the NBI has sought Pacquiao's help in providing support equipment fluid, who is known to be his bodyguard.

"I directed my NBI officers three Director Reuben Ople to get in touch with Manny Pacquiao for the surrender of his bodyguard," said NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco in a press release.

*With reports from Jo Clemencia; PDI Central Luzon Desk; Agaches E. Tomas; PDI Mindanao Bureau and Reyes T. Quicumbo in Manila*

dti
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY

NOTICE

TO : DISTRIBUTORS and RETAILERS of ISLAND (PORTLAND) CEMENT manufactured by CEMEX PHILS. Inc./SOLID CEMENT CORP. (Antipolo, Rizal Plant);

and the GENERAL PUBLIC

The DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY — OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS hereby informs:

That a PRELIMINARY ORDER, dated August 13, 2004, was issued by the DTI Adjudication OFFICER in Administrative Case No. 04-07 entitled "DTI-Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection, Complainant vs. Solid Cement Corp., DEMEX, Jaime Ruiz de Ilarza, Jose Luis Ramos de Ilarza and Francisco Cua, Respondents" for violation of quality/safety standards, as provided in Article 163(a), Chap. 1 of R.A. 7394 (CONSUMER ACT), the dispositive portion thereof reads as follows:

"In view thereof, the ADJUDICATION OFFICER is fully satisfied xxx xxx that the Respondents herein are continuing to manufacture for sale and to distribute in commerce their Portland Cement/Island Cement which has consistently failed to pass the DPWH-BRS tests, thus tending to render ineffectual any adverse judgment that may be rendered herein.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, let an ORDER be, as it is hereby issued:

1. COMMANDING Respondents to immediately CEASE and DESIST from selling, distributing, delivering and disposing of ISLAND CEMENT, or any brand manufactured by the SOLID Cement plant in Antipolo, Rizal, in bulk and in bags, to customers, dealers and distributors, including, but not limited to, building stores and hardware outlets/stores.

x x x x x x x x x

SO ORDERED.

Makati City, 10 August 2004

(Sgd.) ATTY. VIRGILIO A. SEVANDAL
Director IV, O.L.S.D. III
Adjudication Officer

VIOLATORS of the ORDER above-quoted will be held in CONTEMPT and penalized with CLOSURE of their business establishment, among others.

(Sgd.) ATTY. VIRGILIO A. SEVANDAL
DTI Adjudication Officer

PDI – August 13 & 16, 2004

# No sacred cows in pork probe–Ombudsman

Previous page A6

The IDM Kilometrón on Rizal," Martinez said of the charges which she said was filed by anonymous complainants. "I don't want to face baseless people if they come forward. Please face it."

**The law no sacred cows.** We will go after the top to expose how high and mighty they are," said Aumentado. Ombudsman Ernesto Mares, also the spokesperson of the anti-graft office.

The PDAF, previously known as the "Countryside Development Fund, is a pork barrel, a source of kickbacks and campaign funds for legislators. A census said that up to 80 percent of the pork barrel for infrastructure projects.

A member of the House of Representatives is allocated P60 million to PDAF a year, while a senator is allocated P200 million.

**The government's plan** to increase and impose new taxes has termed calls for the abolition of the pork barrel. Opposition quarters have cited the need for new taxes if the pork barrel was scrapped.

Told that Martinez was a member of the House prosecution panel during the impeachment trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada in 2000, Mares replied: "We will still investigate her even if she was in the House prosecution panel."

"See how the administration threw out Macaraig's artillery on it," he said.

Virginia Santiago, head of the Public Assistance and Corruption Prevention Office in the Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas, said the complaint against Martinez stemmed from a report of the GSP Council in Cebu, which earlier created a fact-finding committee to look into the matter.

The GSP Cebu committee report showed that Martinez allegedly deposited the P13.5 million intended for the GSP into her account with the Bank of the Philippine Islands branch in Pasay City on Sept. 22, 2003.

The transaction took place when Martinez was president of the GSP Cebu and her daughter Ma. Celia was the treasurer. The P26 million was meant to be a "financial assistance" to the GSP council in Cebu.

## Player of Baga

The P13.5 million was reportedly turned to the municipal government of Baga, Cebu, where Martinez's son, Gilbertito "Tingg" Martinez III, was the former player of the GSP team.

But instead of depositing the money in the GSP account, it was reportedly returned to the branch of the Land Bank of the Philippines in Baga, which it was charged into a dummy account owned by Ma. Carla Martinez.

The transaction was reportedly not backed by a resolution from the GSP council. The GSP came to know about the movement of its funds when the Land Bank Baga office asked for a resolution from GSP Cebu.

In two separate transactions, the Baga team received P7.5 million from Martinez's PDAF and the funds were deposited in the GSP council's treasurer's fund. In separate occasions, the funds were converted into GSP checks payable to cash and were received by Martinez.

But from the P13 million, Martinez reportedly donated P600,000 to the GSP-Cebu council.

As in the P13.5 transaction, the P26 million was reportedly not received by an unidentified or fraudulent from the GSP council.

Contrary to the claims of Martinez, Santiago said the DBM had yet to issue a ruling on the matter. It was Santiago who asked the COA to do a special audit of the funds.

## Corrections

IN THE Aug. 12 issue, a front page story translated that Hallmund Bader) was "the first full-blooded" Tausug to gain admission to the Master of Public Administration program of the John F. Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University. There have been other Tausugs who have not only gained admission to the program but who have earned master's degree in public administration at the prestigious school. One is Amina Rasul who earned her MPA at the same school in 1999; another is Sharlyn Elio who earned hers in 1981. And they are at least "full-blooded" Tausugs—like Bader is.

**In some copies** of the same issue, the headline of the front page story, "Lt Tausug admitted to Harvard," also gave the wrong impression that Bader was the first Tausug admitted to the American university in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There have been many Tausugs who have graduated from Harvard's medical and law schools.

* * *

IN THE Aug. 13 issue, the front page banner story "Govt to sell vanity plates," misspelled the name of the assistant transportation secretary. The correct spelling is Antolin—not Anatly—Lantion.

* * *

IN THE Aug. 14 issue, the front page banner story announced the location of the Pentagon gang's suspected hideout as that the military had attended. The suspected hideout is located in the Mapandan town of 18 (the Bulgaria R.) Pinakatan—not Bulkan Bulacan Province.

* * *

IN THE Aug. 14 issue, a story on page A6—"Drug users hit 3,488 as of July, says PNP"—erroneously reported that the country had an estimated 3.4 million drug users as of July this year, "almost double the 1.8 million figure a month before." Should it be that drug users were recorded in June 2003, not June 2004—as per a source, he amends, believes.

* * *

Readers may send their comments for correction of factual errors to Letters to the Editor, c/o editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Makati-Mandaluyong Boundary, Brgy. San Isidro, Makati City. Fax: 896-6214. Text e-mail to letters@inquirer.com.ph and clarification@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Isaul Valdevieso, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address readers@inquirer.com.ph.

# Go slow on North Rail project, businessmen warn GMA

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

LOCAL businessmen have urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to go slow on the North Rail project...cautioned to...not nearly P1 billion per kilometer mistake...Malacañang is determined to saw up during her state visit to China next month.

Industrialist Raul T. Concepcion said the government should convene Rizal penthouse bottom underwriting big-ticket projects that would force it to jolt up more foreign debt.

"I think we must undertake a study thoroughly first(ERR) study on this project," Concepcion said. "If economic is leading us (money) for a project, it doesn't mean we should accept the offer and undertake the project no matter the cost."

The 32.186-km North Rail project is expected to cost P82B million to be financed from the Export-Import Bank of China (EXIM) million) and commercial banks (EXIM billion). The loans would cover only the first section of the railway's first phase from Caloocan City up to Malolos, Bulacan. The project's second stage would extend it up to the Clark economic zone in Pampanga, the President's home province.

At today's...peso dollar...exchange rate of P56.31...the project would cost over P900,000,000 per kilometer.

But Malacañang appeared to be dead set on implementing the North Rail project despite criticism in case would be too prohibitive.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the North Rail project was a "vital linchpin" in two of the President's 10-point agenda of national progress—the promotion of development and the reorganization of Metro Manila.

"China is helping us in this effort and we are further scaling this partnership," said Bunye in a statement. The North Rail project will be on top of the President's agenda during her state visit to Beijing on Sept. 2-5.

Concepcion suggested the government make sure the rail project could repay its debts at no or very minimal cost to the government.

# Fischer said to have Pinoy family; RP asylum sought

BEIJING CITY—Filipino-born grandmaster Eugene Torre has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to grant must-lose grandmaster Bobby Fischer asylum in the Philippines, saying Gen. Fischer had a family here.

"I spoke to [Torre's] relatives, Jose Miguel Arroyo and I asked him to raise the possibility of Bobby's asylum here. That is a good reason, [he has a wife and child here. He wanted them out of the limelight because he was afraid the US might try to get to him through his [Filipino] family," Torre told the broadcast on Sunday.

Fischer is being held in Japan after he tried to leave the country on June 30 to come to the Philippines. Officials at Narita International Airport detained him for using a canceled US passport.

Fischer is wanted in the US where he was indicted for violating sanctions against Yugoslavia. Fischer played a match against Boris Gata Spassky in 1992 in Yugoslavia.

Amaro Silva, dean of the Philippine Chess Federation and Manny Aquilino Inc. (PhilCona), said the group will picket the US and Japanese embassies on Tuesday to assert Fischer's rights.

"No matter how the right to asylum may be abridged player (he played any game in any part of the world). Sports is apolitical," Silva said in a telephone interview.

Silva said PhilCona is urging us rally other chess clubs to join in protest. Close to 500 chess clubs exist in the Philippines although only about 100 of them are accredited, he said.

"But 100 chess clubs can add their voices to our clamor to [Malacañang] to give Bobby asylum in the Philippines," Silva said.

You're said he tried to ask Fischer to allow his Filipino wife and child to out here and appeal for his asylum.

"But Bobby does not want them to be in the spotlight. He is very paranoid about the international news of America," Torre said.

He did not disclose the whereabouts of Fischer's family.

Fischer visited Manila, Baguio and Dagupan City in 2001 to broadcast a series of shouts against the US, the international Jewish conspiracy and his former allies, whom he blamed for the copyright theft of his works and his property.

Delfin Mercado, Baguio Radio Baguio station manager, said he never knew that Fischer had a family here, although he recalled seeing Fischer with women during his Philippine stay. Fischer made three separate visits to Baguio, he said. With reports from Gilbert Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

# Small firms hike gas prices today

THREE independent oil firms are raising the prices of their gasoline and diesel fuel by 35 centavos a liter today after the world prices of finished petroleum hit historic highs.

Industry officials said yesterday Unioil Petroleum Philippines Corp., Seaoil Petroleum Corp. and Flying V would change the new prices between 6 a.m. today and midnight tonight.

As oil price rises, the Big Three oil companies—Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Inc.—had not announced price changes but they are expected to follow suit in a matter of days.

Fernando L. Martinez, Seaoil Petroleum Corp. chair, said the prices of imported gasoline and diesel had reached P34.3 billion a liter...the highest level in 25 years.

"For this month's price, prices have gone up by P1.50 a liter," Martinez said. "But it is impossible for us [local oil companies] to raise pump prices by that much."

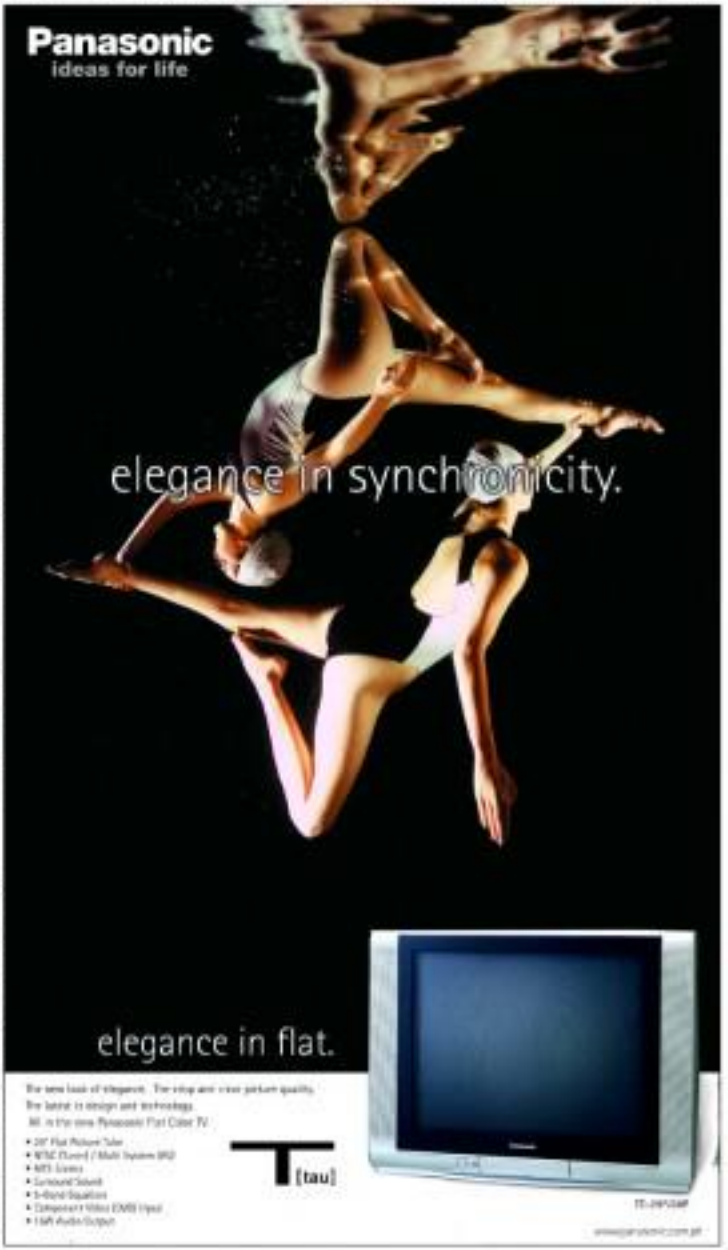
He said oil firms would resort to smaller but more frequent price increases to recover costs.

Flying V director Rhodel Lopez said his company expected to hike prices by 35 centavos to 50 centavos a liter at midnight tonight.

Lopez said the latest increase was due to the oil companies' having accumulated "undercoveries," which means they were absorbing part of increases in the world market.

In industry parlance, increased costs are underrecovered if these are not reflected in pump prices.

Reported By Dennis Chan

# Got a question on sex? DOH hotline has the answer

By TJ Burgonio

GOT QUESTIONS on sex but were afraid to ask?

If you want quick and accurate information, all you have to do is call, text or e-mail the Department of Health's PopPlus hotline.

"This is a mechanism for widening access to information [on health] natural so people can have an informed choice," Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said Monday at the soft launch of the hotline at the DOH office in Manila.

"This would enable couples, married ones or those in a conjugal union...to have better information about their reproductive situation," he said.

PopPlus provides answers to queries on a wide range of health issues, including fertility, reproductive health and, yes, family planning methods. It can be accessed by landline at 122-0178, by text at 0917 8326716, and by e-mail at feedback@doh.gov.ph.

It is manned by four counselors, consisting of two psychologists and two midwives, who are experts in these fields. They will answer any questions from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day, except Sunday.

At the launch, reporters were invited to call in or text questions to PopPlus. One reporter called the landline number and asked if suicide-assist during sex was an effective family planning method.

She got this reply from a counselor: "No, we don't consider it an effective method . . . because fatal coitus are of the male organ once before the non-ejaculator."


PRESS D TRIPTOURS, INC.

Split Type Aircon
1 hp P16,500
1.5 hp P19,000 2 hp P20,000
Free Installation!
Call: 8886696

SANI-KING
Special Events!
PORTABLE TOILETS
641-4071
642-0920

COPIERS
COPYTRADE

PRECISION ELECTRONICS
Heavy Duty Time Recorders
Call for free demo
893-9873 to 77

Special Promo Package
BANGKOK
HONGKONG
SINGAPORE
Budget Fares:
$ 384 $ 336
$ 479 $ 499

PROMO PACKAGE
BATTLEZ INT'L TRAVEL & TOURS

FLAWLESS HANDS
Prettylocks

UNION

PANDA TRAVEL SERVICE INC.

RAMSA
The Official Sound System of the OLYMPIC GAMES

SUERTRES 4 2 5 (1st draw) 6 2 3 9 29
SUPERLOTTO 6/49 10 23 36 41 43
METRO
Text Textbook inquirer.net or e-mail to 2207 (Globe) or 383 (Smart)
E-mail at _metro@inquirer.com.ph
Sub-Editor: Canon B. Rito, Jose G. Dayao

# Protection of herons fly high

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PROTECTION starts with education.

Residents now fly near Villa Encarnacion in Barangay Malanday, Valenzuela City warning motorists not to hunt black-crowned night herons during curfew hr.

The signs were put up by barangay officials and by local politicians.

Our poem, citing the Wildlife Act of the Philippines, warns would-be violators that they could be fined up to P20,000 and imprisoned up to six years should they harm the birds.

### Ordinance proposed

Twenty councilors on a proposing an ordinance to protect the herons and other migratory birds in several areas in the city, but it will take a month before the proposal is approved.

Under the proposal, persons who would be caught catching or harming the birds would have to pay from P5,000 to P15,000 in fines and jail for 6 to 12 months.

Village president Lorenzo Bautista told the herons they had been looking after the herons some three hours since they first saw the birds in 2000.

### No longer helpless

But then they did not have the power to hold accountable those who caught or killed the birds.

Now, with the ordinance, we hope that people are learning to appreciate the herons through the media and through government activities, Bautista said.

The tourist on Tuesday of a wounded heron brought attention to the plight of hundreds of herons and other migratory birds which have been fleeing to parts of the city. The rescued heron, named Hulo, is under treatment.

# Goodbye, license confiscations

By Marjoue C. Ortiz

ROAMING today, acting drivers can keep their licenses but may have to part with their money if they fail to comply with the rules of the new Metropolitan Traffic Ticket (MTT) scheme.

Under the new system, traffic violators no would no longer confiscate drivers' licenses. Instead, they would issue an MTT for which the motorist could pay the fine at any Metrobank branch.

"By removing the hassle from the old system, drivers are expected to no longer resort to bribing a traffic enforcer to avoid inconvenience," said Chair Bayani Fernando of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

### Warning aired

However, Fernando told motorists to simultaneously with the MTTs.

Fernando yesterday said over his weekly radio program on dzBB that violators would pay as much as thrice the original fine if they ignore their traffic tickets.

"If the motorist fails to pay the fine within seven days, he would have to pay twice the original price," Fernando said.

And if a defiant violator is caught on the road with an unresolved ticket, he is warned he is forced to pay thrice the original fine.

### Renewal to be barred

Also, drivers and vehicle owners with unsettled violations will be barred from renewing their licenses or vehicle registration.

Authorized MTT issuing officers could be identified through a patch sewn onto their left breast pocket.

Meanwhile, motorists having complaints regarding traffic violations or the violations being slapped against them can call 136 to add violations information.

LIVING UP TO ITS NAME
A motorcycle driver runs through flooded Dagat-Dagatan Avenue in Caloocan City after a sudden downpour Sunday morning left the road under six inches of water

# Thai ship in collision sued, barred from sailing

By Clarissa S. Batino

MANILA Interglobal Co. (Interco) would ask the Manila Regional Trial Court to extend a 72-hour temporary restraining order to bar Friday against the foreign cargo vessel M/V Sea Celebrity.

Interco said the Sea Celebrity damaged two its Bacoled-based M/V Saint Joseph the Worker Thursday afternoon on Manila Bay, causing damage that would need three weeks to repair.

The shipping subsidiary of Metro Pacific Co. filed a P200-million damage suit against the owners of the Sea Celebrity before the Manila court last Friday which issued the TRO. However, the restraining order lapses this afternoon.

Interco spokesperson Gian Kidera said the shipping firm would likely ask the court to extend the TRO as the company has yet to get in touch with the owner of the foreign cargo vessel.

The Sea Celebrity is reportedly registered in Thailand and has no definite route. The vessel is being held by the Coast Guard for further investigation, and for assessment of its obligations to Interco.

"Until now, we have no details on the owners and the operator. This is why we need the TRO to prevent the Sea Celebrity from sailing," said Kidera.

Kidera said the P200-million sought by Interco was only for damages, and did not cover the losses the company would incur while its vessel was being repaired.

Another source said the Saint Joseph the Worker was one of Interco's most profitable vessels answering the Bacoled and Iloilo routes. It services cargo and passengers, and earns for the company P2.6-M and less each trip.

Reports said the collision tore a 99 meter-long and a meter-wide hold on the left hull of the third Joseph the Worker.

The collision could not have come at a worse time for Interco as it continues to battle under the weight of continued losses.

## Taguig gunplay probed

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

THE NATIONAL Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) has formed a fact-finding body to look into the shootout Saturday between Taguig municipal policemen and Regional Special Action Unit agents.

NCRPO chief of staff Leonardo Espina said the inquiry body will be headed by Supt. Ricardo Nicolas, which will submit its report to Police Director Vidal Querol, which has direct jurisdiction over the Taguig police, by Tuesday.

PO3 Dinchor Alcalde de Leon told the Inquirer yesterday.

The shootout erupted after Taguig policemen attempted to arrest the drug suspects Friday.

Taguig policemen said the suspects tried to bribe them but they rejected the offer. Lito, however, members of the Regional Special Action Unit (RSAU) reportedly arrested and started extorting from the suspects.

The RSAU men reportedly insisted on arresting the suspects despite policemen who wanted to release them.

NCRPO spokesperson Supt. Reynaldo said both groups seemed to have violated some procedures.

## MetroBriefs

### P10-M factory fire

A P10-million rapid plastics manufacturing corrugated products in Las Piñas City yesterday, destroying an estimated P10 million worth of equipment and finished goods. Zone investigators said fire, which razed Rosarian Gun Cotton on QAA Road, Barrio Pamplona, Carmona, around 11:45 a.m. QAA Road Investigator said fire city was an open bridge collect millions of pesos from customers but was unable to provide property owners cooperate. She stressed that revenue from delinquent taxes were necessary to ensure more and continuous delivery of basic services in Las Piñas, particularly health and education. City Treasurer Ryan P. del Rosario revealed that delinquent real estate taxes due were usually owned by commercial business establishments over the past 10 years.

### Las Piñas action

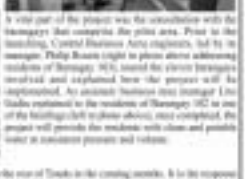
Las Piñas Mayor Imelda T. Aguilar is urging real property owners with outstanding taxes due to settle their delinquency or face auction of their properties by the end of the year. Aguilar said the city was in an image to collect millions of pesos from properties but was unable to provide property owners cooperate. She stressed that revenue from delinquent taxes were necessary to ensure more and continuous delivery of basic services in Las Piñas, particularly health and education. City Treasurer Ryan P. del

### Roosevelt's ministry

THE ARTIST Mario Roosevelt will commemorate on Thursday (Aug. 19) the feast of Saint Louise Riviere with the launching of the Saint Louise Riviere Healing Ministry in the Roosevelt mansion house in Quezon City. The saint is credited as the patron of cancer victims. Documentation of 678 is in. For information, contact Fr. Leandro Rito OP, OSB, or Mrs. Peggy Lukmanto (585-6, or 463-7863 or 921-4102).

GASFAR
fuel saving tips
CHECK FUEL TANKS/ TANK LINES

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
Tuloy-Tuloy Ang Serbisyo
Project : Tondo Foreshore F-1 Zone Pilot Project (Upgrading of the Water Delivery System in Tondo)
Location : F-1 Zone (Area bounded by Estero de Vitas, Velasquez St., R-10 Road and Capulong St.)
Project Cost : P92,250,827.00
Project Start : Groundbreaking middle of August 2004
Project Completion : 90 days after groundbreaking
Beneficiaries : 6,500 households (around 46,000 residents) in Barangays 96 to 106, Zone District, Tondo



Prepare for new HIGH PAYING opportunities in Japan!

Learn Basic / Advance Nihongo for

- Caregiver ( Home helper ), Nurses , Students , OFW (Japan bound)
- Professionals (Lawyers, Accountants, Flight Attendants, etc...)
- Other Industry ( Bank / Hotel / etc. )

PLEASE CALL : TESDA cc 139-c/ Tel.: 3916 0870 loc 26, 3917



# The WORLD

Edita Lorenne B. Gocco

# Explosions kill 10 as Iraq political conference opens

## *Renewed fighting seen in Najaf after talks collapse*

CURE BAD BREATH NOW

THERABREATH KIT

Call 800-1938

BAGHDAD—Ebtaz reached Baghdad on Sunday as Iraqi leaders met to pick an assembly to oversee their interim government, highlighting the problems the country faces on its stuttering road to democracy.

Three mortar bombs hit a commuter bus station in central Baghdad on Sunday afternoon, killing about 10 people and injuring about 15 others, police Lt. Yasser Nwaaz said.

The opening of the conference also came amidst the prospect of renewed fighting in the holy city of Najaf, where Shiite militiamen were in a standoff with US and Iraqi forces after the collapse of peace talks aimed at ending fighting that has killed hundreds and threatened to undermine the authority of interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi.

Mehdi Jaafiza of radical Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr warned the interim and police chief Ghaleb al-Attaar told all media to leave the conference by midday, citing security concerns, he did not elaborate.

Under tight security and a curfew in parts of Baghdad, 1,100 political and religious leaders gathered for a three-day conference in the fortified Green Zone compound to choose the 100-member assembly.

The assembly, or national council, will oversee the interim government until elections are held in January.

"Your presence here today is the biggest challenge to the forces of darkness that want to tear this country apart. This is not the end of the road, it is the first step on the way to democracy," Allawi said in opening remarks.

Shiite Isaw blocked off roads and closed at least one bridge over the nearby Tigris River to try to prevent insurgents disrupting the event.

The conference has been beset by boycotts from key players such as Sadr and the Muslim Clerics Association, an influential grouping of Sunni religious leaders.

The conference was due to open in late July but was delayed after the United Nations demanded more time for preparations.

Some delegates taking part have accused the government of stacking the slate with Allawi supporters.

"The political parties in power now have the overwhelming majority of delegates. They left no room for independents," said Mohammed Bahr al-Uloom, a leading Shiite cleric and a former president of the now defunct Iraqi Governing Council.

Government officials have said Iraqi and US forces would resume military operations against the Mehdi Army in Najaf.

There was at least one minor skirmish on Sunday but no major attack.

Sadr has vowed to fight to the death.

The fighting in Najaf has spread to seven other Shiite cities in southern and central Iraq.

An uneasy truce has held there since Friday when US troops and tanks loosened their noose around the Imam Ali Mosque and a vast ancient cemetery nearby. Reuters/AP

FREE HELICOPTER RIDE
Available to First 100 passengers

As low as
Hong Kong 3d/2n $208

HONGKONG\SHENZHEN 3D/2N $155
HONGKONG\SHENZHEN 4D/3N $165
HKG\SHENZHEN\SHANGHAI 5D/4N $339
HONGKONG\BEIJING 5D/4N $449

Image Travel & Tours
Tel.: 404-8338 to 56, 404-4278 / 33, 523-4229

Magellan World Travel
Tel.: 522-4809 to 11 / 526-5667

INCA
WATER TANK SALE!!!
FACTORY DIRECT (until supplies last)
10-YEARS WARRANTEE

STORAGE TANKS

INCA PLASTICS PHILS., INC.

Telephone:
888-2775
888-2740
888-2756
Fax:
888-1168

WE ALSO SELL TRANSFORMERS, GENERATORS, TRAFFIC LIGHTS, ROAD MARKINGS, FLASHLIGHTS, DRUMS, PAINTS, BOATS, FORKLIFTS, SEPTIC TANKS, ERMAN TRAPS, ETC.

SSP Nanyang Technological University STANFORD UNIVERSITY

SINGAPORE STANFORD PARTNERSHIP

jointly conducted by

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore & Stanford University, USA

Applicants with engineering or relevant bachelor degrees are invited to apply for

Master of Science (MS) June 2005 Intake

Application Closing on 30 October 2004

Website : www.ntu.edu.sg/ssp

Scholarships, Worth: good local applicants eligible for full or partial scholarships comprising:
• Tuition grants at Student Local MS1 / Part Issued and at most earlier to Research Months stipends

Special Features:
• MS 1+ years - Full semester immersion of 1 academic quarter at Stanford taking regular courses.
• PhD (4 years): Attend 1 academic quarter at Stanford taking course/doing research
• MS and PhD degrees in Environmental Science & Engineering awarded by NTU
• Additional certificate awarded jointly by Stanford University and NTU
• Courses taught by Stanford and NTU professors on campus, and using intranet or IT tools

VELLAGIO TOWER

For Elegance Comfort and Convenient Living

READY FOR OCCUPANCY
NO DP for as low as P17M

WAJ REALTY DEVELOPMENT, INC.
2071 Leon Guinto St., Malate, Manila
Tel. No. 522-8218/536-2401/524-1187/559-8487 Fax No. 526-1181

# Dutch soldier killed in Iraq, 5 badly hurt

AMSTERDAM—A Dutch soldier was killed and five seriously wounded in a shooting incident on Saturday evening in Iraq, the Dutch defense ministry said.

The ministry said in a statement early on Sunday the shooting probably began with an attack on a military vehicle in the southern town of Samawphah, where some of the around 1,200 Dutch troops stationed in Iraq are based.

A ministry spokesperson said this was the second death of a Dutch soldier in Iraq after another was killed in May. The dead man was a 39-year-old member of the military police.

The ministry said the five wounded, one from the military police and four from the army, were out of danger and their condition was stable. Several other soldiers were slightly wounded. It was not clear who carried out the attack.

After the shooting, rapid reaction forces and Apache helicopters were engaged, while a US Black Hawk helicopter helped with the medical evacuations.

Some time after the incident, the Dutch camp came under fire but no soldiers were hurt. The Dutch military police is investigating the attack.

Parliament recently extended the mission of the Dutch troops, who are mainly stationed near the southern town of Samawa, which has been peaceful compared to other parts of Iraq.

At Rumaylah is just north of Basraiers.

Japanese soldiers are also based near Samawa in the first deployment of Japan's military to an overseas combat zone since World War II. Reuters

# US to bring home 70,000 troops from Europe, Asia

SIOUX CITY, Iowa—President George W. Bush has decided to bring home tens of thousands of US troops from posts around the world...more of them in Europe and Asia—plus 100,000 of their family members and support personnel, US officials said.

The changes will have no effect on forces in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Bush will announce the move Monday in a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Cincinnati, two senior administration officials said Saturday.

As part of the largest troop realignment in years, Bush will shift about 70,000 uniformed military personnel, most of them currently in Europe, the senior officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. A significant proportion will come home, though it was not clear when.

US armed forces stationed abroad, other than Iraq and Afghanistan, now numbers about 200,000, of whom 100,000 are based in Europe. The Pentagon advised German officials earlier this year that it now considering removing two army divisions from Germany and replacing them with smaller, more mobile units.

The division is meant to "strengthen our ability to respond to threats overseas," one official said, declining to elaborate. AP

SPORTS

Text Feedback: inquirer sports mms@inquirer.com.ph (2317 Globe or 211 Smart)
E-mail sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Teddyboy G. Melendres

# Brin brings joy to RP Olympians

## *But faster swimmers sink Pangilinan, Molina; wind gusts thwart Jethro*

By Armando T. Dagmala Jr.
Sports Editor

ATHENS—When everyone else stumbled, featherweight boxer Romeo Brin raised the banner more merry and provided a ray of light and hope to an otherwise bleak day for the Philippines in the 28th Olympic Games here Sunday.

The 31-year-old Brin knocked down the taller Polish Bogusz of Sweden in the final round and scored a points victory that moved him a step closer to achieving the Philippine dream of an Olympic gold.

It was the first triumphant note of a Philippine campaign that has been highlighted by one setback after another after two days of competition in the sweltering heat of the Greek capital.

Brin is the diminutive scrap of the country's individual event in the evening in the ancient Panathenaiko Stadium.

The Filipino team hoping to end their string of misfortunes at the Beijing Olympic Boxing Hall into Sunday afternoon and Rios, who came out of retirement last year to qualify for his third Olympics, did not disappoint his countrymen.

Elsewhere in the Games, the Filipino seven-member archery team

Judoka Dingdong Penaflorida enters the mat of his 66-kg bout Miguel Molina last night could not double off his Olympic pitch as the two Filipino swimmers took different routes Sunday to The same destination —disappointment.

And shooter Aniceto Bosantog bowed out of the first Olympic stint when he could not find his mark on the windy second and final day of the elimination for Division's trap shooting event.

As powerlifter Arthur Dennis Figueroa was to meet former world champion Nestdy Velasco of

# Olympics security a 'terrorist's dream,' says British paper

LONDON—Security at the Athens Olympics is a terrorist's dream, a British newspaper said on Saturday after an undercover reporter was able to plant three suspicious packages undetected.

Greece, which has spent an unprecedented one billion euros on Games security, attacked the paper's editor and said the reporter was inspired by crime fiction.

The Sunday Mirror tabloid said reporter Rob Graham also used a bogus job as a driver to wander round the main stadium with passes in the names of "Richard Mouse" and "Robert Ian Ladder," and no one stopped him at the Friday's opening ceremony.

"Security is absolutely disgraceful. The Games are a terrorist's dream come true," Graham said in a Mirror statement.

"Giant announcements from the authorities and the resources available, it is as much as an Olympic medal."

For the first Summer Olympics since the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, Athens has spent four times more on security than Sydney did in 2000, and security personnel outnumber athletes seven to one.

Greece's Public Order Minister George Voulgarakis warned angrily in the media, saying the article was a "profound insult to journalism and the principles of objective and responsible reporting."

"I would recommend to Mr Graham to read fewer detective novels," he said in a statement.

The Mirror, using an exposé tactic popular with Britain's tabloids, said it launched its investigation five weeks ago when Graham took a driving job with a British contractor. Reuters


WHY WAIT FOR A CHECK-UP?
Get your own BP with

New! TENSOVAL BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS

TENSOVAL
M-DIGITAL
- Easy-Logic
- Clinically validated
- Other specifications
- Jumbo cuff
- Memory for readings & values (30sets)
- Automatic inflator
- Memory 90 readings & values (3sets)
- Large easy-to-read LCD display
- guaranteed 1,000 measurements
- Easy handling for client 2 button use
- comfortable patterned cuff for upper arm circumference (22-32 cm)

TENSOVAL
COMFORT
- Easy-Logic
- Clinically validated
- Other specifications
- Memory 90 readings & values (3sets)
- Large easy-to-read LCD display
- guaranteed 1,000 measurements
- Easy handling for client 2 button use
- comfortable patterned cuff for upper arm circumference (22-32 cm)

Exclusively Distributed by: medical center trading corporation
Available at: mercury drug


# PM says China practices attack on Taiwan capital

TAIPEI—China has been practicing an attack on Taiwan's capital, Taipei, aimed at killing or capturing the island's leaders in a "decapitation" action, Taiwan Premier Yu Shyi-kun said on Sunday.

The strategy appeared to have been inspired by the US action in Iraq to capture Saddam Hussein, said a senior military official.

Tensions have been running high in the Taiwan Strait as China prepares for a possible military showdown, convinced Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian will push for formal statehood during his second term, which began in May.

Both sides are holding annual war games. China, which views the island as a renegade province, has been staging mock invasion drills while Taiwan's military has responded in kind off each air attack.

No real Beijing began to simulate an attack targeting Taiwan leaders after the capture of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

"After the Iraq war, China has targeted Taiwan leaders. Taiwan's capital, and if the presidential office in its so-called decapitation action," Yu said aboard a plane to Central America after a stopover in Los Angeles, where he met some ES counterparts.

"Their internal documents and some drills indicated they have been preparing for such a move." Yu said in comments translated on Taiwan cable news network TVBS.

Military spokesperson Huang Jung-sheng said China's decapitation tactic could include capturing or killing the island's president and flying missiles at the presidential office in central Taipei.

"The moves by the United States, including the capture of Hussein, during the second Gulf War likely have inspired Communist China," Huang said. "Communist China has never given up attacking Taiwan and it's current strategy is aimed at winning the war at the first strike," Huang said.

"Decapitation' is definitely an option for its future military actions against Taiwan," Huang said.

Taiwan could withstand an attack from Beijing for two weeks, the China Times quoted military sources as saying last week, in comments seen aimed at assuaging fears raised by a computer simulation showing Taipei could be captured in six days.

The simulation is the United States, Taiwan's biggest arms supplier, would meet its treaty obligations and come to the island's defense by enacting diplomatic pressure on China, intelligence and or armed combat assistance.

Military experts say China is accelerating its arms build-up in preparation for war, but its 2.5-million-strong People's Liberation Army (PLA) still lacks sophisticated amphibious vessels to turn it into a credible invasion force. Reuters

# Pupils among 16 killed in India blasts

SUMMARY, India—Separatist rebels killed 16 people, mostly schoolchildren, in India on Sunday and wounded dozens in bomb and grenade attacks on independence day ceremonies in the troubled northeast and dispersed Gandhi.

The children were taking part in a parade in the insurgency-racked village of Assam when a powerful bomb ripped through a college ground, police said.

"Suddenly there was an explosion, it left a deep crater," said police inspector general Bhajen Sharma, at least 20 people were wounded.

Several underground guerrilla groups fighting Indian rule in the northeast had called for a boycott of the independence celebrations, seeing it was a black day. The rebels accuse New Delhi of plundering the region's rich resources. Reuters


PHILIPPINE AIRLINES, INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of Philippine Airlines, Inc. will be held on 26 August 2004 at the PAL Learning Center, 640 Pedro Faura corner M. Adriatico Streets, Ermita, Manila at 10:00 o'clock in the morning.

For your convenience in registering your attendance, please present some form of identification, such as passport, driver's license, or company ID.

Office of the Corporate Secretary



Personal Laminators

THE IDEAL LAMINATING SOLUTION FOR PERSONAL, COMMERCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL APPLICATIONS

Personal Photo Pouch Laminator - 3.5 Sizes

Dealership Inquiries Look for Alex

- High Quality Photo Laminator
- Great for home and office use
- Easy operation

Authorized Dealers

PHILCOPY



FREE INTERVIEW PROGRAM

AICL AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF COMMERCE AND LANGUAGES

idp

# 13 dead in Florida hurricane

PUNTA GORDA, Florida—Emergency personnel toiled through a second night early Sunday after Hurricane Charley ripped a swath of death and destruction across Florida, crushing thousands of homes and businesses, leaving up to two and possibly as many as 10 dead and killing at least 15.

Law enforcement officials confirmed 13 dead statewide late Saturday, with search and rescue operations ongoing. Wes Mitchell of the state emergency operations center told AFP.

Four of the confirmed dead were in Charlotte County, which includes this blue collar and retirement town, where relentless mobile home parks were flattened in grotesque parodies of rows of aluminum.

Streets and highways were littered with the wreckage of vehicles and running like rivers by the wind that raked across the state late Friday.

Rescue workers said the death toll was sure to rise as they worked their way through debris in search of survivors and families.

They said they had ordered 40 body bags for one trailer-mass grave in Punta Gorda, a sleepy community marked on Charlotte Harbor off the Gulf of Mexico that took the brunt of the storm's ferocious force.

"Punta Gorda appears to be ground zero," said Craig Fugate, Florida Director of Emergency Management. AFP

# Pope in Lourdes: Respect the ill, old

LOURDES, France—Pope John Paul, calling himself a sick man among the sick, visited the world's greatest Roman Catholic "miracle shrine" on Saturday and urged society not to cast aside the old and the suffering.

The 84-year-old Pope, ranked by Parkinson's disease and arthritis, looked weak on the first day of a 12-hour trip to the southwestern French city where the Madonna is said to have appeared to the peasant girl Bernadette Soubirous in 1858.

His frailty was evident throughout the day. He read his airport arrival address in Dutch-born Jacques Chirac slowly.

Later in the lourdes grotto where the visions are said to have taken place (also had raised him on a kneeler to pray but he lost his balance and nearly fell over. They rushed up to prevent him from falling.

After several minutes of intense prayer, he designated a cardinal to read his address for him, even though it was only four paragraphs long.

"While sin, I share a time marked by physical suffering, yet not by that reason only less fruitful in God's wondrous plan," he said.

Later, he had difficulty pronouncing his latin/ salde/ nuncuntia of thousands of people as an evening candlelight procession around the shrine which some 8 million people visit each year, many of them sufferers who pray for miracle cures as they drink holy water. He took three sips of holy water on Saturday.

The Church has recognized 66 cases of what it calls miraculous healings among the thousands of pilgrims who have said they left wheelchairs free of their ailments. Reuters


KOREA PACKAGES
Come and Enjoy Sale Travel with us.
Free Water Accessories!
Rte One Promotion for KR. Fare below 0
$695 AQUA WORLD/JEJU/BUSAN/ SEOUL/EVERLAND/LOTTE
Aug 26-28
$710 ONCHNT SORAKSEOUL
Sep 14-16 EVERLAND/LOTTE
LOCAL PACKAGES
OTHER PACKAGES
FARES
AIR SERVICES to Korean Provinces Tours
BAKIO

JET matic CENTON
SHOWER HEATER
ISO 9001
SEACOM, INC.

MIST FAN COOLING SYSTEMS
Convert your existing fan into an Evaporative Cooling System
SOME MIST INTERNATIONAL

TRUSTED ALL OVER THE WORLD
Introducing Pulmo-Aide Compact Compressor (from DeVilbiss U.S.A.)
Relief that Lasts!
Effective, Reliable, Affordable for ASTHMA & Other Respiratory Disorders
medical center trading corporation

We Offer The World's Most Trusted High Pressure Washers & Vacuum Cleaners!
CLEANSITE COMMERCIAL INCORPORATED

Feel the excitement in Hong Kong!
Philippine Airlines
Swingaround
HONG KONG
For as low as US$210*!
Experience the best of the Orient with Swingaround Hong Kong! Shop till you drop with the fabulous 2004 Hong Kong Shopping Festival. See the amazing Symphony of Lights as it sets the night sky on fire. And get to walk down the Avenue of Stars.
*Rates per person on twin-sharing basis inclusive
• Round-trip Manila-Cebu airfare
• Round-trip airport transfers
• Two nights hotel accommodation
• Daily breakfast for duration
• Daily breakfast for duration only (with meal at Sun Yuen Hotel Hotel only)
• One day Hong Kong and Shenzhen city tour
Rates are valid until August 31, 2004.
HONG KONG TOURISM BOARD
www.DiscoverHongKong.com
Philippine Airlines
It's about experience
www.philippineairlines.com

# Brave Brin delivers first victory

By Artemio T. Engracia Jr.

ATHENS—Welterweight Roberto Brin won a hard, fought bout against a tough opponent Sunday and gave the Philippines a shining moment on a day of heartbreaks in the 28th Olympic Games here.

Brin, who earned the Philippine flag during the opening ceremonies on Friday, did the same thing as the ring and won on points over Ibrahim Patrick Rogers in the first round of the 64-kg division at the Peristeri Olympic Boxing Hall.

The victory revived the muted hopes of the Filipinos, who suffered a setback on Saturday when Christopher Camat, the original choice as flag bearer, lost on points to Russia's Gaydarbek Gaydarbekov in the middleweight class.

Brin, now on his third Olympics, did justice to his choice as standard bearer, dominating the fight from the start, outwitting close blows in the third round and knocking down the feisty 22-year-old Swede after a hook-cross exchange in the fourth.

The final score was 41-35.

The Filipino southpaw will next fight an even tougher opponent in the bout round on Thursday—Pita Intadi's Manus Boonjumnong, a points winner over local boy Ogtay Zon Sontillo to set earlier bout.

The 31-year-old Brin avoided some time after the opening bell to find his range against the taller Rogers, born in Uganda and now fighting for Sweden. But when Brin found his range, he lost no time enjoying the fight to his opponent.

A flurry of punches lost the Swede as much he was given the standing count by referee David Sottilotti. Although the Swede managed to sneak in a few punches of his own, the first round ended with Brin ahead, 9-6, under the electronic scoring in amateur boxing.

Although quicker on his feet and with his punches, Brin had a hard time against the longer range of his right handed opponent. Still, he managed to stay on top after the second round, leading, 20-13.

The third round was furious with Brin slipping successfully. Rogers was scoring points and during it as the Filipino toward the end of the round when he delivered a low blow from what had looked like a poor attempt at a right uppercut.

Brin beat over from pain and was given a 1-minute recuperation for a 26-17 lead and a long count to recover. By the time the third round ended, the Filipino was ahead, 32-24.

Brin pressed the fight in the final round scored and a combination to the head and body knocked the Swede down for the count with 35 seconds gone in the round. That gave him a 41-25 lead with 59 seconds left in the fight.

But Rogers wasn't let him rest and the Filipino decided to ruin it up, dangerously exposing himself to other so done to deny the knockout to come out on top of every exchange, however, and reduce the lead sang to end the fight. Brin had a 41-35 victory.

The rest of the Philippine delegation, bogged down by one setback after another, celebrated the victory with Brin.

"We're all happy," said boxing leader and former Manila Mayor Mel Lopez.

| Country | G | S | B | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| China | 7 | 3 | 1 | 11 |
| Australia | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Japan | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| United States | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| Cuba | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Slovakia | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Italy | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Germany | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Netherlands | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Greece | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Turkey | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| France | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Belgium | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Poland | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| Country | G | S | B | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thailand | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Bahrain | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Colombia | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Ukraine | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Belarus | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Hungary | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Czech Republic | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Lithuania | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Canada | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| South Korea | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Romania | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Kazakhstan | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Ireland | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Brazil | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Spain | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Kenya | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Jamaica | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Iran | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Egypt | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Denmark | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Croatia | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Algeria | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 30 | 31 | 31 | 92 |

## Brin brings joy to RP

(From page A1)

Brin, the Philippine flag bearer in the parade of athletes during Friday's opening ceremonies after officials pulled out Christopher Camat to not have the next day's fight, dominated the younger Rogers from the start.

The Filipino southpaw, now on a possibly final stint in the Olympics, had to survive a low blow in the third round and a desperate charge by the Swede in the fourth to eke out a 41-35 victory.

Brin lost Rogers for a standing count in the first round and knocked down the Ugandan-born Swede for another count with 1:59 left in the furious fourth and final round.

Brin's next assignment will be a thicker and more skilled opponent —Manus Boonjumnong of Thailand, who dominated Greek hero Ogtaiskes Ioannidis on points one-hour earlier.

They will clash on Thursday night. If he handles that assignment, Brin will be in the for a date with the division's top favorites, either Alexander Maletin of Russia or Willy Blain of France.

Mishka and Pimpilan were both eliminated from their events in the aerobics-filled competition at the main pool of the Olympic Aquatic Center.

Mishka finished seventh in his heat and 42nd overall out of 50 runners in the men's 200-meter freestyle while Pimpilan turned up fifth in her heat in the women's 100-m breaststroke and 47th in the field of 48.

"I'm not happy with my swim," lamented Ole 19-year-old Mishka. "I was expecting a little more from myself."

Pimpilan, the UE-based Harvard-bound teenager, did her best but failed in the final 10-m, extending herself with a personal record of one minute and 12.47 seconds. Her previous best, set in last year's US swimming national championship in Morehead, was 1:12.82.

A high school honors student who is bound for Harvard on an athletic scholarship, Pimpilan is 16 years old with a Filipino father and a Syrian mother.

Cheered on by her parents, her coach and a contingent of 11 friends and relatives, Pimpilan jumped off to a good start in her heat, heading through the first 25 m and at the turn. She looked strong going into the final 25 but the rest of the field caught up

# Barrera wants Pacquiao, not Morales

MEXICAN Marco Antonio Barrera, the former pound-for-pound featherweight king, wouldn't object to an old rematch with Filipino Manny Pacquiao than face Erik Morales for the third time.

PACQUIAO

This was revealed yesterday by Pacquiao's Australian promoter, Murad Muhammad, who told boxing website BoxingInfo that "based on his discussions with Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer, he believes Barrera is leaning toward a Pacquiao rematch over a third fight with fellow Mexican legend Erik Morales."

Muhammad, who sources the US campaign that saw Pacquiao win the IBF superbantam crown before stopping Barrera late November in San Antonio, Texas, intimated that the date being considered for the rematch is May 27 on an HBO pay-per-view.

Muhammad is expected to announce the parties as well as the venue of the fight after a thorough discussion with Schaefer.

Reports have also pointed to the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas as the front-runner among possible sites for the rematch since its promoter, reportedly with Filipino roots, had expressed interest in holding the event.

San Francisco and Los Angeles are also possible venues for the proposed rematch owing to the big Filipino and Mexican populations in those areas.

Barrera assumes Pacquiao's biggest scalp-gaze so far, stopping the Mexican in 11 rounds. Jaclyn L. Legaspi-Inq Contributor

# Warriors eye end of skid vs Cardinals

KOLO CITY—The Bolo Warriors try to stretch their skid talons they go up against the visiting Rogers Cardinals Monday in the NBC (National Basketball Conference) finals at the University of San Agustin here.

The Warriors, who have lost five straight times since a hot 3-1 start, are looking to salvage an 80-72 loss to the Cardinals last week in Bagulo City when the two teams tangle again.

Both squads enter the match fresh from their first homecourt home, with the Skyscraper-backed Cebu team upping the Warriors, 92-88, and the Unama Coins clobbering the Cardinals, 87-80, in the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Spring Cooking Oil, PCSO, Shakey's Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Cebu Ferries, Air Philippines, Superstar, Skype Motorcycles, Accelerated Holdens.

Three-point specialist Eduardo Alfado Jr. will not be seeing action for the Warriors as backcourtmate Robert Ly after being slapped a one-game suspension for punching Zubec Inc.'s Reynel Andy Lucring in their previous match.

# PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

# Singh grabs hairline lead

KOHLER, Wisconsin—Vijay Singh took a one-shot lead in the US PGA Championship third round on Saturday after his playing partner, Justin Leonard, stumbled with a bogey at the last.

Fijian Singh, chasing his first major title since the 2000 US Masters, fired a three-under-par 69 to finish on 12-under 204 at a rain-drenched Whistling Straits.

Leonard, co-leader with Singh overnight, had to settle for a 70 and second place after finding a greenside bunker with his approach at the 500-yard 18th.

"It was a lot harder than it looked today, and I didn't play as well as yesterday," said Singh, the hottest player in the game over the last 12 months with six victories on the US PGA Tour.

"Thank God for that little putter of mine; it kept me in play. I guess that's what it takes," he told reporters.

The 42-year-old notched back to a consecutive finish from a belly putter two months ago, going on to win the Buick Open in his next start.

US Masters champion Phil Mickelson, a top-three finisher in the first three majors of the year, equalled the low round of the day with a sparkling five-under 67, tying the third at one-under 208.

Level with Mickelson were fellow American Chris Riley (69), South African Ernie Els (72), Canada's Stephen Ames (69) and Britain Darren Clarke (72).

Another American, Chris Dilsharer, was alone in eighth at seven under after scorings 71.

## Perfect conditions

With scoring conditions near perfect on a third successive day of relative calm on the shores of Lake Michigan, Singh and Leonard (Kenosha) both drove nicely large to stay in the hunt for the final major of the year.

Singh, the 1998 champion at Sahalee, ended off fairways on six, 10, 11 and 16 while 1997 British Open winner Leonard picked up shots on five, six, 14, 15 and 16.

The pair were on track to safely negotiate the tough four finishing holes before Leonard's blemish at the last put Singh down on what is traditionally known as tossing day in major championships.

"Those last four old play every difficult today," said Leonard. "On 18, I always hit a great shot out of the bunker, but it came up short. I then had a nice two-putt from 20-feet.

## Storming start

At one point, it seemed Mickelson would finish alone in the lead but the world No. 4 failed to sustain a storming start after the turn.

Among the day's early starters, world No. 1 Tiger Woods also failed to make the most of a red-hot opening nine. He had an birdie for a three-under-70 and a 54-hole total of three-under 213, nine strokes off the pace in a tie for 25th.

Rivals, desperate to make up ground on the leaders after battling to make the halfway cut by a nine, finished four of the first nine holes to get to three under. Reuters

VIJAY Singh reacts after a birdie putt. AFP/FILE

# Gasol dwarfs Yao as Spain humbles China

CHINESE grosser: King Aaron seems like he is listening as he performs a routine during the event's artistic gymnastics qualifying session at the Athens Olympics. REUTERS

ATHENS—China's towering basketball superstar Yao Ming came up short here Sunday in his battle with fellow National Basketball Association star Pau Gasol, who led Spain to a convincing opening-day victory in the Olympic Games men's basketball.

The majority-assisted duel of Yao, the Houston Rockets' center, and Gasol, a key part of the Memphis Grizzlies, ended in an 82-59 victory for the free-breaking Spanish in the Group A match.

The 7-1 Gasol top-scored with 25 points while Yao, 7-6, had 12 on the final Spaniards convened the team Chinese.

The 2001 NBA Rookie of the Year provided the defining moment of his battle with Yao when he dunked over the Chinese giant in the second quarter, earning a loud shout in the process.

Another gamer, Indy-held off New Zealand, 71-66, while Lithuania beat Angola, 96-91.

Meanwhile, the first time since the United States played Puerto Rico in a game that meant something, a pushing and shoving match broke out and fans tossed drinks and debris onto the court.

The last happened but someone in a semifinal match at the Tournament of the Americas, one of the games the teams have played against each other since 1992.

The reason will play again Sunday night in one of six opening-round games on the first day of competition in men's basketball. Serbia-Montenegro also plays Argentina in a rematch of the gold medal game at the 2002 World Championships in Indianapolis. AFP

# Apo hosts Samsung Amateur tour's fourth leg

SINGAPORE top golfers shoot for berths to the national grand finals when they compete in the fourth leg of the Samsung Amateur Tour at the challenging Apo Golf and Country Club in Davao City on Aug. 19-22.

Its national players Jay Bayron and Noriel Estagarro and Louie Sabalejo, the former BP amateur finalist who helped Del Monte advance a fourth spot in the Philippine Airlines interclub, will headline the roster disputing the championship division over 72 holes starting Thursday at the tough par-72 layout.

They will try to join the first three winners—Raymund Sungil Jnr., Ilocano ace Ryan Cardinal Khil (Cagayan) and Philippine Airlines interclub, will headline the roster disputing the championship division over 72 holes starting Thursday at the tough par-72 layout.

They will try to join the first three winners—Raymund Sungil Jnr., Ilocano ace Ryan Khil (Cagayan) and Philippine Airlines interclub, will headline the roster disputing the championship division over 72 holes starting Thursday at the tough par-72 layout.

Adds Jose, the 72-hole championship battle, there will be 36-hole competitions in men's Class A, Class B, Class C and Class Senior/the ladies' Class A, Class B and Class C.

Trophies and appliances will go to the top finishers of the tourney also sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, Gatorade, adidas Taylor Made, KEE by Carmen Hebreakers, Pink Polo Bearing, Coppertone Sport, Bogie-E, and Philippine Airlines as the official carrier. Hilton Bros. Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 89.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite are media partners.

Ben Blue Ocampo, president of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group, announced that changes in dates for the remaining legs of the course-hopping circuit.

From Davao, the Samsung Tour goes to Mt. Malarayat for the fifth leg on Sept. 27-30, then to Club John Hay in Baguio on Oct. 11-15 then the climactic leg will wrap up at the Cebu Country Club on Dec. 14-17.

The national finals is set on Jan. 21-24 with the venue to be announced soon.

For inquiries, call 8536810.

Golfers from various clubs in Davao, like the Ranchos Palos Verdes and the Davao City GC, including those from Pueblo de Oro in Cagayan de Oro and Del Monte in Bukidnon are also expected to vie for spots.

DOWN AND OUT

GREEK boxer Georgios Gkuis tumbles out of the ring as he was training to Australian's Jared Tallgrove in a middleweight match in the Athens Olympics. REUTERS

# Davao gals blast Baguio XI

DAVAO unleashed a barrage of goals to rout Baguio, 16-0, while Siegen Occidental and Mindoro Oriental scuttled their own quintessential duel in the opener of the IPP Dagupan Beer Stadium at Under-19 Women's Championship at the Mindanao City Sports Center.

Karen Pardine and Rose Tan shone with four goals each, while Melody Lairy and Lyra Mishina-Umeyo added three each for Davao, one of four favored teams in the inaugural girls' tournament organized by the Philippine Football Federation and backed by Mayor Rodolfo C. Noriando and the Mindanao City government.

Siegen Occidental stunned star-studded Cebu, 3-0, behind goals from Darlene Dilao in the 44th and 60th minutes, while Mindoro Oriental drew three goals from Anabel Limbo in a 5-1 thrashing of Iligan City.

The National Capital Region—another title favorite—and Cagayan de Oro were still playing at the time of press time in their respective matches.

Davao and Siegen Occidental collide today in an early battle for leadership at 1:30 p.m. at the Mindanao City Sports Center, after the Baguio-Cebu and Ilocos-NCR matches at 8 and 10 a.m., respectively. Oriental Mindoro and Cagayan de Oro-Misamis Oriental meet at 3:30 p.m.

Laguna, the other favorite for the crown, debuts against Legaspi-Albay at 10 a.m. at the Manila School field. Markum and Rizal-Rizalite have open breathers on the same pitch at 8 a.m.

# Brin brings joy to RP Olympians

Viewed page A-12

with her in the final 10 m.

Hilton Pangilinan clipped less than half a second off her personal best, 4:06.60, was almost a second off her.

The 19-year-old from University of California-Berkeley also had a good romp in his heat, outrunning strong at the start and staying in front (place through the 100-m turn. He was 4:08.42nd going into the final 50 until he faded in the final 25 to finish second in last.

He admitted he had not been up to his best so far in his Olympic debut, but he looked forward to doing better in his final two events—the 200-m Individual Medley on Wednesday.

"I haven't really been that good, but I expect to do better in the 200 breast and the 200 IM," Brin said.

Dennis, a relative newcomer to top-drawing after distinguishing himself as a world champion in practical shooting, saw his hopes fade in the wind of the Shotgunside Olympic Shooting Center. (See Brin brings joy to RP Olympians)

The wind picked up on the second day of competition and wreaked havoc on the aim of the 32-year-old Dennis, who qualified for the Olympics as a wild-card.

He wound up 52nd and fourth-to-last in a field of 56. And even if he had been perfect in the final 50 targets of the afternoon, Dennis still would not have made it to the top 6 for the final round shoot-off.

# UM Hawks run up amazing streak to 60 wins

MEETING can stop three-time champion University of Manila.

Led by Jose Gomez and Ryan Bagtas, the Hawks won their seventh straight game and 60th overall since 2001—following a masterful 88-73 win over archrival University of Makati in the Maroon basketball tournament at the UM gym.

Gomez routed all guards thrown against him, scoring a game-high 27 points to lead the Hawks' coach Aaron Torres to their seventh straight win in the nine-team, double-round tournament.

Bagtabas contributed 15 points, while Edward Velasco added eight points.

Overall, the Hawks have now won 60 straight games dating back to the league's inception four years ago.

The Hawks can complete an eight-game sweep of the first round of eliminations with a win over Dasmarinas-ng-Lugar City Monday, Aug. 23.

James Mangaoang carried the fight for the Wizards with 20 points, followed by Donald Lorica and Michel Segundo with 19 points apiece.

In the second game, Centro Escolar University edged Dasmarinas-ng-Lugar 69-68.

Dasmarinas-ng-Lugar 73-68, in second game in five-win streak with University of Makati and New Era University with similar 4-3 cards.

**The scores**

**First game**

**UM (88)**—Gomez 27, Bagtabas 15, Velasco 8, Dimaculangan 12, Bernabe 7, Santiago 7, Lanot 5, Abejar 4, Jose 4, Gamao 2, Dizon 0.

**UMAK (73)**—Mangaoang 20, Lorica 19, Segundo 19, Tolentino 5, Dimaculangan 3, Bongabong 2, Jacinto 2, Jardin-Amaro 0, Gonzales 0, Ramos 0.

**Quarters:** 20-18, 42-36, 64-54, 88-73.

**Second game**

**CEU (78)**—Cordero 17, Mhaxmel 12, Jimbon 11, Salamat 9, F. Hernandez, Estimada 8, Bongcaras 5, Mitchell, Cortez 2, Dapog 1, J. Hernandez 1.

**DLS (68)**—Bunag 14, Gamot 10, Go-Bon 10, Garcia 8, Cortez 7, Bautista 6, Ocampo 5, Ilo 4, Cruz 3, Tiamson 2, Estrellon 1, Bonoan, Abaya 1, Pascual 0.

**Quarters:** 21-13, 37-28, 59-48, 78-68.

INQUIRER

# OPINION

Publisher Isaac Tarriela
Editor-in-Chief Letty Jimena Magsanoc
Managing Editor Joe Ma. D. Nolasco
Associate Editors Ramon C. Casiple
Associate Editor for Technology Rosario G. Gonzalez
News Editor Antonio T. Carpio Jr. / Chief News Copy Desk Head Max B. Soliven
Opinion Editor Lorie V. Aves
Associate Editor Francisco R. Rodriguez Jr.
City Editor Dino Lazo
Associate Editor Juan V. Sandoval Jr.
Editorial Consultant Ramon Tuazon
Office Manager/Auditor Pearl D. Gamboa
Art & Design Director Loren A. Velasco

Chairman Chairman Emeritus Maximo V. Soliven
President Alexandre Prieto-Romualdez
Senior Vice President for News and Marketing Rosario R. Romero
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services Oscar R. Orbos
Office Administrator Ruth P. Gamboa
Advertising Director Lorna P. Lardizabal

All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, nor be circulated in any manner not in the form in which it is published, without the publisher's prior consent.

## Text power

LET it not be said that, under the new Ombudsman, the government's main graft-busting agency is afraid of new ideas. In recent weeks, Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo's office has shown a welcome openness of mind, a willingness to think out of the proverbial box.

Sometime ago, the agency announced a cell-phone text program with select media organizations. The objective: to learn the ins-and-outs of investigative journalism, to help build effective cases against corrupt public officials. Then last week, the agency announced its "text power" program, essentially a bank of cell phone-based hotlines designed to gather leads about wrongdoing and misconduct.

"Some people are too afraid to report anomalies in cases where their identities can be shared," Assistant Ombudsman Francis Ricaza told reporters. "It is easier to report graft when you don't have to identify yourself."

The new system's principal advantage lies precisely in the anonymity that the cell phone can offer. Technically, leads may come not only in Short Messaging System or text format, but even in the newer Multimedia Messaging System format: pictures or video captured on a camera phone.

The cell-hotline-launched system has a secondary advantage: nationwide, even global, reach. The Ombudsman deploys only 17 graft investigators to keep watch over a bureaucracy of 1.5 million government employees, an untenable ratio of one for every 88,000. "Right now, our resources are full. Our manpower is inadequate," Ricaza said. In theory, the "text power" program could effectively raise the ratio by dramatically extending the investigators' reach. A FilipinoexpatriateinHouston, Texas, or a Filipino engineer in Dubai, for instance, can report a marauding official's suspicious shopping binge directly to the Office of the Ombudsman, at a cost of only a few pesos per message.

Agency officials have warned reporters about the possibility that the system will allow citizens (as Friday's news story phrased it) to "report graft as it occurs"—that is to say, report the crime the very moment it is being committed. This is an idea that cutting-edge technology (a cell-phone hidden in the palm of one's hand, a camera phone that can take pictures from many angles) has put within reach.

But trailing a lead is one thing, filing a solid case is another.

The agency would need to verify every single tip, separating the detailed from the vague, the useful from the useless, the last from the ramos, the true from the fabricated or imagined or devoutly wished for. How the Ombudsman's office will do this is yet unclear. Even if only five percent of the country's 24 million cell phone users (a fair response rate, if we go by direct marketing standards) report a lead in a given year, that's 1.2 million messages—about 3,300 a day—that graft investigators have to sort through. Even if only one percent of the leads in a given year result in the filing of cases, that's still 12,000 new cases about a thousand a month.

A first look at the numbers thus reveals the proposed system's chief disadvantage. It may raise the public's expectations, only to fail them. The promise of greater citizen participation offered by the new technology is real; ordinary people can do their civic duty by reporting what they suspect to be a crime or the basis of criminal behavior to the Ombudsman.

But the promise of government action may be more apparent than real. If the new system results in a thousand new cases, but the number of graft investigators remains pitiful, then the Ombudsman will not be—cannot be—in a position to meet the public's raised expectations. It is not enough that the new system allows citizens to help fight corruption, under cover of anonymity. The system must not only make the agency more accessible; it must also make it more accountable. Otherwise the result will be so predictable as to be a breach of public, giving up on yet another noble-sounding government initiative.

This is not to say that the Ombudsman's openness of mind will come to nothing but grief, only that provisions must be taken to manage expectations. Technology alone cannot be the answer.

## The controversial Smokey Mountain Project

AS THOUGH fms. Miriam Defensor-Santiago didn't mention former Solicitor General Frank Chavez even once in her privilege speech on the Senate Mountain Development and Reclamation Project, her request was identical to the motion filed by Chavez last May 3 in the late the Supreme Court. I secured a copy of the motion (which pertains, together with copies of the Senate resolution and other supporting documents).

In brief, the petition seeks to declare null and void the three Build-Operate-Agreements among the National Housing Authority, the SLI Builders Inc., and the Smokey Mountain Development and Reclamation Project.

The project envisioned the conversion of the Smokey Mountain dumpsite in Tondo into a housing project, the reclamation of foreshore lands near the dump, and the development of a commercial and industrial zone on the reclaimed areas.

The project was conceived in 1988, during the term of President Corazon Aquino, but it was during the term of President Fidel Ramos, who assumed office in 1992, that its implementation took place. SLI Builders was granted the award to develop the former dumpsite through contract negotiation.

Ramos, however, imposed the condition that the project should be in "no cost to the government." R.O. Garcia Realty Corp. is the developer of the dumpsite into a medium-rise housing complex and industrial/commercial site, as well as to clean and develop 40 hectares of foreshore land. Since R.O. was not to be paid for its work, the reclaimed land was to be its payment.

However, like the contract for the PEA-Amari reclamation project and Fontana Leisure Corp., the Smokey Mountain Project—both of which were nullified by the Supreme Court—the NHA-SLI contract was likewise convoluted several times.

In these amendments, the area to be reclaimed was increased from the original 40 hectares to 250 hectares. And the reclaimed area to be given to SLI was likewise increased from 13 hectares to 23 hectares. In a later amendment, R.O. was given the right to reclaim an additional 150 hectares of foreshore land. This was supposed to be the payment to R.O. for the cancellation of an indemnity to host garbage. In still another amendment, the area to be reclaimed in Phase 2 of the project was no longer specified, but was unlimited.

However, after constructing a few low-cost housing buildings, R.O. ran out of money to fund the project. To finance it, R.O. entered into a Joint Venture Agreement with the NHA, Philippine Tourism Bond and the Home Insurance and Guarantee Corp. Various government agencies pooled assets to bankroll the project despite the agreement that R.O. would fully finance it. In addition, R.O. also entered into a Smokey Mountain Project Participation Certificate.

Thus, the government ended up financing the project, contrary to the original agreement. SMS and R.O. would share in the proceeds of the project equal to 50 of the gross sales (GS).

Investors in the Asset Pool as of July 31, 2003 were:

1. Social Security System (P1.39 billion; 2. Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (P681 million); 3. LandBank (P124 million); 4. Home Guaranty Corp. (P50 million); 5. PGC Provident Fund (P50 million); 6. PNB (P50 million); 7. SSS Annuitants and Pensioners Corp. (Pensiflex).

8. Other personal investments (P475 million).

Since the Clean Air Act was approved on June 23, 1964, the incinerator project was abandoned. Nevertheless, R.O. was still given the right to reclaim an additional 150 hectares of foreshore land "at no extra cost."

Despite the Asset Pool, funds were still insufficient for the project. As in August 2000, NHA surveyed other properties into the pool. From the year 2001, 10 hectares of land were transferred to Harbour Center, which has upcoming further facilities in the project site. The last turnover value of the reclaimed land was P1.75 billion. Also, there was a pool gain of P607 million worth of common shares and 1,143 preferred shares of Harbour. The common shares translated into 40 percent of the total 1,422 voting shares in the Corporation.

However, through other circumstances, Baylon Realty II was able to dilute the pool's monetary worth/holdings. R.II Builders and R.II Holdings now hold 20 percent and 40 percent respectively of Harbour, respectively.

By virtue of the amendment of the contract, Chavez argues that:

1. Section 1(b) of the R.O.-pool contract further limit because they have never granted any authority or exclusive lands of the public domain. Section 1(b) is reserved exclusively in the Public Estates Authority.

2. R.O. Builders can't acquire reclaimed foreshore land because they are inalienable public lands beyond the commerce of man. Assuming that reclaimed lands were declared alienable and disposable, R.O. still cannot acquire the same because there were any declaration that these lands were no longer needed by public use. Assuming that these lands are no longer needed for public use, R.O. still can't acquire these because there was never any Law authorizing the sale. There was never any public bidding awarding ownership of these lands to R.O. Builders. Assuming that all requirements for a valid transfer of alienable public land had been performed, R.O. Builders, being a private company, is expressly prohibited by the Constitution to acquire lands of the public domain; and

3. The Harbour Center, being a private company, whose shares stocks are owned and controlled by Filipinos is a nominee of public land.

## Low life

I LISTENED with much amusement to the representative defending the wisdom of conducting a congressional inquiry into some of their colleagues who have been charged in connection with "services" by parties. The consensus among the men was to draw the thing like a hot, well, potato. That included Batasan Mata representative Teddy Casiño who said dutifully that it is the first time he established if there was any solid basis for it, otherwise it would merely give rise to congressional grandstanding.

Marguerite Trias in his now made light of it, saying he too was opposed to an inquiry, but not on the ground of a possible violation of the right to due process, he said, he was not being shielded or, in his age, he said, the spin might be selling but the flesh is weak. He did not say he would certainly not be so much of grandstanding.

Well, for once, I think myself in agreement with the representatives. Congressmen are the "stars"—which is never easy to do. My only reason is that if there is any inquiry at all, it should neither itself or throwing out not who the beneficiaries of the secret service were, but what they did for the secret service with. Whether it was money that came from their personal pockets or from their official budget, whether it was money that came under the exception "do not ask, do not tell" or under the rubric "repair of roads, etc." I understand though that "insurance" has been benefited from the official secret fund for being of use to executive.

I did have some of the sin but yes on TV that they received money just because they were governors, mayors, and many executive officials as well. Despite the fact that much corruption, they limited their services to "GSO-ing" and not much else. But they did say their clients were exceptionally generous, many of them offering gifts of jewelry and money and "insurance" for having been so generous. I myself do not mind other congressmen, governors, and mayors do what they did, or said before it—they are past the age of innocence, even if they rarely drove it—but I do mind what they do

## AS I SEE IT

*Neal H. Cruz*

## THERE'S THE RUB

*Conrado de Quiros*

with money that came from my hard work. I do not mind that they are generous in their philanthropy, but I do mind that they are profligate in their plundering.

For it there must be an indictment, it should not be for the crime of the congressional pension or the forbidden hop, but for the vicious time they took our money and ran around with it. That is the only inquiry that makes sense—as that doesn't take notice of our money and plays around with it.

But I agree with the congressmen who say this is best treated with benign indifference and thrown quickly into oblivion. It needs to pass the fully-of-itself-so-called "Honest Senators report" Ramon Mitra is regaled as with as the only senator who has come out of proportion. At the very least, Congress does not lack for things to inquire into, such as the extent of corruption in the port bureaucracies, or the impending financial collapse of the country from mounting debt. Heaven's who are trying to restore a flying saucer once and it seems to most normans with a screwdriver, however pretty she is.

As the "Honest Senators" experience also shows, even like this have a way of drawing media publicity to their deeds. Of course, not much else. Scandals are always crowning jewels in a season where an entire industry has been built to generate them—due to the inverse reason of the country's industrialization. I remember right after the election of Congress' "Space Boys" in Pedi's State—they were rumored to be picking up pick them—or so can I fairly hopefully assume would years ago. Which did see with Pedi's Prime Star helped it

rightly to power. Scandals of this nature are the stuff of tabloid, and there but gossip, both of which tend to remember this country more than anything else, if it remembers it.

I have heard a couple of veteran representatives say she has that some of their colleagues are pursuing prostitution is something to be concerned about. That may be so. But I would worry about not hearing the wrong language coming out of the mouths of the honorable and reverend when he has little to do with public service. A congressman who goes to Mass every Sunday and assiduously avoids the subway hours does not necessarily make a good politician—for the latter, he must be prepared to lose his personal property and soon for bills out of convenience rather than convictions. The only kind of morality I want to see from my congressmen is the one that knows how to with economic honesty and integrity and some degree of principle and courage. That is all I have to right now to others.

Because a congressman who doesn't personalize pronounce his pecuniary himself to the highest bidder, and one who frequents restaurant does not have to answer how much the president spent in taxpayers' money in campaign in the last election cycle. Ordinary go for the second. Personal abstentiousness does not necessarily translate into public virtue, it often translates only into enough greed. And likewise, it does not necessarily translate into moral courage. It often translates only into a spoonful of lukewarm oil.

Like I said, the only thing I'd be interested to know is whether a congressman proposes to his colleagues a resolution that he be given a random vote by secret ballot on whether he is running with his money or mine. Otherwise, I'd rather know who among the congressmen are consistently elected to Malacañang for a meeting with Oliver Mesmerized-Antoy—then those who are interested in the campaign for a meeting with Ramon Bautista. Some congressmen are worse than others. The kind that sells their souls is one we deem the one who steals their bodies.

Low life just isn't always found in the streets.

# Critical shortage of doctors by 2010

**POLITICAL TIDBITS**

*Belinda Olivares-Cassayan*

CHED Commissioner of Education emphasized interlinking to be more set up against the reported glut of the Philippines replacing Secretary Ermita in Arroyo with former Batasan representative and current Liberal Party president Roberto Ang as education secretary. They're looking for the reinstatement of Dr. Atienza reportedly was not invited to the private event. If this is impossible, they would rather have another educated, "no politician."

I agree that it's time to lump Dr. Atienza in Depthal, not to mention Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan and Dr. Lito Atienza. I also came to tell the Depthal people that if Manolo replaces Dr. Atienza, they won't be getting a laid deal.

* * *

Like former Depthal chief Noel Rosty, Abad is a former (from the Ateneo law school), and as we have seen in the past, at times it's better to get a non-educator as the can bring a fresh outlook on the department. Moreover, Abad is one of the few people who can stand up to President Arroyo a lot of support from civil society that has been quite leery of "politicians." Irving Shaw serves in Congress with distinction, hard-working and unwavering in the face of the Philippine General Hospital, who reinstated the various successful operations undertaken by PGH and other hospitals to separate Filipino conjoined twins. Recently, the PGH staff of doctors (Class '72 graduates who trained in Australia, around) than the expertise to do operations on same similar to that of the Angeles twins is readily available, but the problem is funding, the doctors do not get enough support from the government to perform such operations. I think for the other surgeons, which it is doable.

* * *

**But what caught our interest particularly was Abunawi's remark that the medical profession here is in serious peril of losing its doctors, as many of them go to the United States to work as nurses because of the easy environment and the much bigger pay abroad. He noted that senior medical residents have only around P7,000 to P8,000 a month, while those in the United States as nurses, they earn only with $26 without Amounts until that enrollment in medical schools have not dropped to recent years because of this situation, and to check, a recent Department of Health study showed that for the results of our physicians to see an overall, the country will be experiencing a critical shortage of almost 30,000 doctors by 2010.**

* * *

Abunawi's army plies with the story in yesterday's business, since Southern Luzon Governor Rosemarie Arnaiz wrote on the fact that 13 of the 15 provinces her province's integrated hospital office are taking a very strong stance. Of these, they're sorry to losing for the United States. Only Aurora was spared in saying she'd appeal to the doctors to rather continue as the people more than the potential of earning more money in the US. Chief of hospitals Dr. Armando Flores admitted, too, that the district hospitals in the province need about 15 doctors, "big and to admit, there are no takers." PGH's Dr. Gloucester opines that as a short-term solution, hospitals should be allowed to charge so that health service doesn't become such a misfortune effort on the medical people's part. But of course, hospitals' ability to raise salaries is also affected by the patients' ability to pay their bills.

The medical profession's problem is certainly problem that has to be addressed before it assumes "epidemic" proportions.

* * *

Recently my husband's driver was approached by a yellow-uniformed Makati traffic aide bearing the name "S. Gregorio" on his name plate. Gregorio said the government car the driver was using had a plate number not allowed in Makati in that time. The driver showed his government ID and the exemption that HMDA granted my husband. But the aide arrogantly ignored them, saying that HMDA's exemptions are worthless there. Dumbfolding his license, the traffic aide scribbled away while in the meantime handing a violation ticket. The driver requires, but not before shouting that if he wanted his license back, he had to fork out P500. The driver got the impression that if he did fork out P500 (which he didn't have), it would have gone to the aide's pocket.

* * *

Next morning I offered to go with him to the traffic bureau's office to lodge the complaint and I could only wonder the HMDA exemption, which Gregorio claimed he honored in Makati. Bureau chief R.C. Jim Miguel was not apologetic about his aide's arrogance and claimed that he did not have any such exemption about the arrogance of his traffic aides and claimed that from that he gave the erring subordinate a severe reprimanding and a suspension. But Jim argued that there is a copy of the Makati City ordinance of April 2004, which allows cities such as Makati on the city's own. 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. "Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program," as well as the exemptions for unregistered cars. He explained that in all of these classes, only Makati and Mandaluyong do not honor the HMDA exemption.

* * *

I find this apparent ruling most incomprehensible as it could leave one stranded in Makati if his/her HMDA car breaks down. Whatever's the point with the city's traffic scheme. The question is, why not make exemption rules uniform for all of Metro Manila, so as to simplify matters? Or is it another example of the arrogance of the Makati City officials? DOT Boracay, why don't the Makati people publicize this different policy so everyone else will know? One gets so fed-up almost every other time I'm already being approached under the ordinance.

# Do we need a two-child policy?

**COMMENTARY**

*Ernesto M. Pernia*

THE PROPOSED two-child policy underscores the need for the country to adopt a radical strategy to deal with its persistent poverty—the cell-shock of a laggard economy that barely keeps up with population growth and people's rising expectations. The proposed law certainly brought the population issue to the fore.

Do we really need such a policy? The answer is no—not in the form of coercive policy which is implied exercise, when the country needs is a clear national population policy to slow population growth and to address the problem of poverty with other socioeconomic policies—the well-being of households and not any one whole.

Mainly due to inflexible position of the Roman Catholic Church, the Philippines has suffered from top under the sun. Not surprisingly, the Philippines, in this day, finds itself still clamoring on problems that bypassed the rest of developing Asia.

Thus, this bill is done and committee proposes, even public nearly one-fifth (19%) million people from the rate of birth. It also justify explains the country's anemic economic growth and persistent mass poverty. The country's per-capita income growth rate is the lowest in Asia after that of Indonesia's as in the early 1960s. Why is this so?

Some observers have pointed poor governance and corruption and, lately, also to the external shocks caused by trade liberalization and World Trade Organization rules. I think that the real culprit same problems also lower the other Asian economies. Why have they been able to consistently perform better than the Philippines?

The single most important challenge facing the Philippines is its high population growth rate. Becoming the problem has been a tall order to the country's political through slow and erratic economic growth since in the last two to three decades. Meanwhile, the rest of Southeast Asia has become have growing levels also have dropped as a consequence of rapid and sustained growth, sound economic policies and a strong population

policy. While these countries have been benefiting from the demographic "bonus"—that's increases in the ratio of workers (population ages 15-64) relative (young dependents (ages 0-14), the Philippines continues to bear a "demographic onus"—more young dependents as against the number of workers (and savers).

A World Bank study in 2001, based on countries, found that a one-percentage-point increase in a one-to-one relationship between economic growth and income increase for the poorest 20 percent of the population. Our own data reveal rewards using sub-national (provincial, as distinct from national) data. The correlation between income is less than a one-to-one correspondence for individual countries like Indonesia (0.7) and the Philippines (0.34). These results provide empirical evidence confirming the common observation that economic growth benefits the poor. The findings also indicate that poverty reduction can be hastened by addressing other factors that impair the distribution of the benefits of economic growth. Among the critical factors are poor governance, human capital investments, income (gini) and geographical isolation.

In the Philippine case, whose fertility rate is among the highest in all of Asia, it can be argued that a high population growth rate affects the quality of life on the poor's welfare, apart from its indirect impact on economic growth. What are the key precursory objectives and instruments of an effective population policy for the Philippines? Our research suggests the following:

• The first is to reduce unwanted fertility (or to more accurate reach for contraception) through a strong national family planning program, i.e., one that offers family planning ("natural" methods) ("artificial") methods of contraception. Family planning services, comprising information and counseling services, should be provided free to low-income couples who want such services. (Surveys indicate that many women do not have easily access to them.)

• The second is to change the preference for large family size through an incentive structure that tilts in the investments per child and lowers the demand for children. Child benefits, universal education, free education, lower rates through gender equality and empowerment (more women for women).

• The third is to reduce the population growth momentum by promoting later marriage and wider birth spacing, among others. Note that birth spacing is about the only measure that President Macapagal-Arroyo favors; however, without an effective family planning program, to do this effective, even that would be counter-productive.

If backed by appropriate policy reforms in the economic and social arenas, these measures would bring about best results. More specific measures to help improve the quality of the poor's human capital investments in infrastructure and human capital that directly benefit the poor, and good agricultural prices and other food production-enhancing programs that are likely to have poor households.

Population policy makers, however, need to answer questions on the cause to remain in or get out of the low-level equilibrium trap... that vicious cycle of low economic growth, high unemployment, low productivity, persistent poverty, deepening human capital and high fertility? Actual and concurrent national population policy, matched by an adequately funded school program, is needed to break this vicious circle.

* * *

*Dr. Ernesto M. Pernia is Professor of Economics at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. E-mail: ernesto@up.edu.ph*

# Virtual Damocles' sword

**THE LONG VIEW**

*Raymund J. Quilop III*

SARS has always been tagged an ever-present threat and not, our country has seen the repercussion of the fearsome of any to include the air and even the tourism industry. Fortunately, of course, the islands of isolation—psychological or not.

The worldwide call to world-wide web, after all, is the personal computer. Your personal computer, linked through land lines or cable, is your confidence of other computers around the world.

Think about what a disruption of these interdependent lines of communications would result to. You're bound of what borders on the by-the-or goods. Think of small bankers in the service of armies could accomplish.

In peacetime the bankers's strategic value lies in its offering an inexpensive propaganda vehicle which is also most ruthless, regardless of national interests. In case support is needed and the need with the commander-in-chief of the US Pacific Command (Uncpac) in Hawaii, which makes any preliminary an integral part of the systems it offers. Whether it is high level military intelligence or languages and underwater operative training in conducting war-gaming through the line, psychological in a rural and every using PowerPoint for their presentations as the first part of their course. The participants, by being made conscious each problem, are increased to greater control when each of them returns to his unit. Each will have the level of their own a space cooling from our US government to more web site to another.

There is an interesting article, titled "Information Warfare: Chaos on the Electronic Superhighway" way back in 1994 by now-retired Air Force Major Thomas the Alternate Army Study of the People's Republic of China. The article has been reprinted in a book published by that Arlington defense contractor. The article is intriguing to say the least, but I'm sure this policy is being actively researched.

We witness that "Thanks to modern technology, revolutionary changes in the information domain, such as the development of new means centered and the Internet, are enabling many to realize part in the strong national security process." Indeed, we have been affected by the "electronic" revolution, the modern's ("artificial") methods of communication. Family planning services, comprising information and counseling services, should be provided free to low-income couples who want such services. (Surveys indicate that many women do not have easily access to them.)

• The second is to change the preference for large family size through an incentive structure that tilts in the investments per child and lowers the demand for children. Child benefits, universal education, free education, lower rates through gender equality and empowerment (more women for women).

• The third is to reduce the population growth momentum by promoting later marriage and wider birth spacing, among others. Note that birth spacing is about the only measure that President Macapagal-Arroyo favors; however, without an effective family planning program, to do this effective, even that would be counter-productive.

If backed by appropriate policy reforms in the economic and social arenas, these measures would bring about best results. More specific measures to help improve the quality of the poor's human capital investments in infrastructure and human capital that directly benefit the poor, and good agricultural prices and other food production-enhancing programs that are likely to have poor households.

Population policy makers, however, need to answer questions on the cause to remain in or get out of the low-level equilibrium trap... that vicious cycle of low economic growth, high unemployment, low productivity, persistent poverty, deepening human capital and high fertility? Actual and concurrent national population policy, matched by an adequately funded school program, is needed to break this vicious circle.

* * *

*Dr. Ernesto M. Pernia is Professor of Economics at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. E-mail: ernesto@up.edu.ph*

# Readers' requests

I often get e-mail and letters from the readers, which are intended for the Opinion section of the newspaper. Most of these are letters to the editor and the rest are articles for lengthened or republished.

I print them right here in the Opinion and for their consideration and review. The materials that meet the section's criteria of relevance, clarity and length merit a good chance of being published as soon as space permits.

**READERS' ADVOCATE**

*Raul J. Palabrica*

Some letter writers do not want their names to appear in print. The usual reason given for that request is the fear that the disclosure of their identity may put their lives in danger as result in the loss of their livelihood. If it is apparent from the contents of the letter that the apprehension is well-grounded, the plea for anonymity is granted.

There are letter writers who ask that I acknowledge receipt of their letters and tell them when they will be published in "their" issue when in fact the newspaper's whole that routine sounds plausible, considering with me that the volumes of letters we receive every day—they are quite many to mention and therefore get a copy of the newspaper's issue for that day.

I have no problem acknowledging receipt of letters to the editor. But stating the date of publication is one of the questions because I do not participate in the choice of letters published. In this section, that is the prerogative of the Opinion editor. In the section I like this, I simply indicate the letters are written on which the Letters section every day for his letters.

When the sender writes back to thank me for my advice, I keep my fingers crossed as to the eradication of his wish to see his name imprint in the newspaper.

**Newspaper policy**

I once received a letter where the writer specified that his letter should come out on a week day and not on a weekend. She already assumed that her letter met the standards for publication.

Why wouldn't? Because she kept the lessons only from Monday to Friday; she wrote another newspaper on Saturdays and Sundays!

The explanation intrigued me because the reason's explanation is highest during weekends and holidays when the readers have the luxury of time to leisurely go through the contents of the newspaper. I can only speculate why the newspaper has more pages during those days.

I suspect the reader's right to choose what newspaper she wants to read, if she wants to write in her reading fare, that's her privilege. Out of curiosity, I did not ask the reader why she refrains from reading the Saturday and Sunday issues. Whatever maybe the reason, it's something that the editorial staff should discuss. In the composition going something right, that makes some readers like to read them on Saturdays and Sundays?

It is to tell for the new letters or articles that attempt to "clear" the reader's misunderstanding exists, by saying that doing so would "show that the Inquirer is not biased against any person or group," or that it lives up to its slogan of "balanced news and fearless views." It's obvious psychology of a new letter-writer: see our opinion or be overlooked.

There is no guarantee of publication in the Opinion section, it's the section editor who has the last say on matters of this nature. So far, I think the system has not worked.

**Non-publication**

A request from the readers that the newspaper is unable to satisfy or reach because they are not letters or articles sent were in doubt if they do not into the criteria for publication.

Considering the volume of letters and e-mail that the editorial staff receives daily (which averages from 60 to 100) and lack of manpower, there is no way the newspaper can write the senders individually as call them that it received their submissions.

For the same reasons, the requests cannot accept by mail in other forums to the readers that do not find print in the Letters section, much less explain why they did not deserve publication.

I can only assure the frustrations of letter writers who check the newspaper every day and not see the product of their genius come out in print. But don't lose the resolve of readers in the business, and in other newspapers, for that matter.

Word of advice to those who find themselves in that losing game: If their materials are not published within two weeks from the time they were received by the newspaper, chances are their believe meet the criteria for publication.

This should be the cue for the writer to either (a) hit back with other newspapers or revise his manuscript to find the reason for its failure to pass muster with the inquirer. Who knows when one's find it or how you don't succeed, try and try again!

* * *

*The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Libas Street, Barangay Ugong Norte and Ortigas Ave., Quezon, Makati City. Or through fax no. 897-4595 or 06, or reader advocate@inquirer.com.ph.*

**THEY SAID**

**Apathetic tropes**

"In terms of topicality, it's still in an very very unsophisticated kind of like difficulty legislating so-called cases. You don't get sympathy from traditional politicians."
—Philippine party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales explaining the slow progress in Congress

**Miracle of sharing**

"My wife said I cried when Jamie was born. It doesn't seem like my tears would come. So an hospice specialist practically ridiculous hope for doctors—including the possibility of using placebos, since he had 'his own arm. Now we can send him in a day care center. Just like any other boy."
—Actor Michael J. Fox, who has Parkinson's disease, and only one arm, per grandson Jamie, in an article in help of a New Zealand radiotherapy and blood bone marrow donor

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

# Worst two weeks for press freedom

IN LESS than two weeks, four Filipino journalists were murdered, making the period between July 25 and Aug. 12 quite possibly the worst two weeks for press freedom in the Philippines. Since last year, 13 of our colleagues have been killed. Since 1986, 55 of us have been assassinated. But not one suspect has been convicted of any of these murders.

Why?

We've been asking ourselves that that question until they cannot give us a straight answer. They say they have solved 14 cases, but the Philippine Save Police's definition of "solved" is different from that of the rest of the world. "Solved" considers a case "solved" when the suspect has been identified and after the case has been turned over to the Department of Justice for prosecution —never mind if the case is still pending or if the suspect is at large. "Solved" almost is not only misleading—it insults the justice system and the sufferings of the families and friends of our fallen colleagues.

The failure of the authorities to solve the killings sent the president sounding her own President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive to the PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane to conduct clear murders has produced no positive results. That, the climate of impunity in the killing of journalists persists.

Today, Aug. 16, media groups in Manila and the nearby provinces—among them the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, Press Photographers of the Philippines, Philippine Center for Photojournalism, College Editors Guild of the Philippines, Union of Journalists of the Philippines-IFJ, Batanguas broadcasters Association... will hold a picket rally in front of the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame, along Edsa, Quezon City. Assembly time is 9 a.m., at the Solaris Tower, Edsa corner Timog St., Cubao. We, the MIT hope to see you.

NUJP chapters and other media groups across the country will also hold their own protest actions the same day.

We would like to invite you to join us in expressing our displeasure with the failure of the police and the judiciary to solve these killings.

Please wear black, whether you will attend the picket or not. This is our small way of mourning the deaths of our colleagues and in expressing outrage over the killings.

Thank you for standing by us in our struggle for press freedom.

**—JOSE ESPINA STARING, chair;**
**CARLOS H. CRUDO, secretary-general,**
**National Union of Journalists of the Philippines,**
**www.nujp.org**

## 'Luxury' taxes, more ideas to up revenues

IT'S TIME to solve the budgetary deficit, the government should refrain from imposing additional taxes on essential and basic goods and services, such as gasoline and other petroleum products. Luxurious items and other all products are used in manufacturing, which is indispensable in economic undertakings. Telecommunications, which include our messaging, have so much a vital role in modern trade and commerce, not to mention in family relations and social interactions.

If new taxes are to be imposed, this should be done on products that encourage vices, such as cigarettes and liquor, as well as on imported luxury items, such as expensive cars (e.g. BMW) that consume excessive fuel, signature clothes, watches, jewelry and other non-essential items that only drain our foreign exchange reserves, and imported chocolates and fruits. Imposing higher taxes on luxury imports will not only raise revenues but also conserve our forex reserves for more important and basic items. Or, perhaps, the government would want to free luxury imports temporarily until our balance of payments improves and the pressure on our foreign debt eases up.

So much can be done without resorting to increasing the burden of taxation.

**—ALBA CRUZ,**
**Catalina, Women's Avenue**

## Strange ways of Malacañang

TOR is in reaction to the reports that Malacañang has accepted the resignation of Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo.

Perhaps the time is already just to expect that the powers-that-be, who decide on matters like who the next commissioner of customs will be, will change their minds. Too late or too little though our efforts may be, we must speak out pleas for the record and say that the Bureau of Customs (and the nation) needs a man such as Commissioner Bernardo at his post, especially in these critical times.

The members of the Samahan ng mga Pensionado sa Aduana (SPA), representing the bulk of customs brokers with daily dealings in the BOC, have seen several customs administrators come and go and are keenly reserved but speak when we say that Commissioner Bernardo is one of the best we have seen for some or such while. He has engineered and streamlined a most needed order into our Customs as representatives of customs brokers. He has put into better shape the operations and processes of the BOC at the Port Area in Manila as well as in the different ports and districts all over the country. Smuggling and graft are increasingly and steadily brought to bare by Bernardo's all encompassing plans to make the BOC a clean and honorable service to the bogeyman of nation building. As a result, despite various obstacles that still hinder its objectives, customs revenue collections have significantly grown.

Revenue targets will be surpassed, the bane of smuggling will finally show its teeth and the BOC will be the pursuit most dependable service it is supposed to be if the plans and programs and the people who made them are given the time and the backing they need to finish their work.

This is why our final is outrageous that Bernardo's work will now be cut short just when they have the best chance of seeing true, where they are most needed. Governments wage are indeed very strange. Bernardo will no doubt do well wherever they place him. But the BOC needs him today.

**—RENE BONDOLEJO,**
**president**
**Samahan ng mga Pensionado sa Aduana (SPA)**

*If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of transplaceds by the hospital, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Bagtikan Extension, City of Makati or send a fax to this 897-2782, 897-4594, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.*

*Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.*

## Tax cheat vs corrupt public official: who is more evil?

I QUE only partly agree Mr. Chris Reyes ("Tax cheats are worse than murderers," PDI, 8/20/04). What about the corrupt government official siphoning off already scarce public funds into their bottomless pockets? What about those government employees who report to work every day but only work seven to three hours a day, most of the time doing something unrelated to their work, if they are not just killing time? And they still have the face to stage rallies for higher pay and benefits? These people have no shame!

Who would be interested in passing taxes if these would just be wasted by our legislators in the form of pork barrels, if the rate of participation projects is exceptional by up to four to five times their original price? Do you think they elected government officials run for public office because they really want to serve the people? My foot! The statistics that get for a whole term are much, much less than what they spend to get themselves elected! Still, when an official stole his/her term or retires from politics, there are tons of millions of pesos richer than before their election.

I've called as several businessmen and most, if not all, are willing to pay their taxes religiously only if they see that their environment is being accosted in and getting better; only if they don't hear that legislators are pocketing big, big slices of their pork barrel; only if the government is not wasting public funds by hiring more employees than it needs to efficiently and effectively serve the people.

Our public officials and employees should learn to be more respectful to the people who pay their salaries through taxes. Now tell me, who is more evil?

**—FERDIE CHAN,**
**ardilla@yahoo.com**

Now you can reserve a seat with your cellphone!
Introducing
txtCEB
Just text "CEB" to 2982 for Globe and Touch Mobile; 386 for Smart, Talk 'N Text and Addict Mobile, and for Sun Cellular, text "CEB" to 2982 or click on the directory of "The Mall."
95
CEBU PACIFIC

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

# Pampanga execs to probe hike in toll fees in North

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Officials in Pampanga said they would investigate the plan of the Lopez Group-led Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) to increase toll fees along the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) by 40% to 75% percent at the end of the year.

Rep. Ana Feli Bondoc and Pampanga board member Dionisio Tomeldan said they would find ways to prevent the MNTC from imposing "exorbitant" toll rates that would adversely affect local businesses and residents.

"The planned increase is too much. Everybody will be affected, even passengers of buses using the expressway," Bondoc said.

She said she would discuss the issue with the 24 member General Luzon congressional bloc in their meeting today. The bloc, she said, is now included party-list representatives from the region.

"I will ask the Central Luzon bloc to initiate an investigation of the MNTC's planned fee increase ... and find out why the MNTC wants to impose toll fees that people cannot afford to pay," she said.

Tomeldan said he and his colleagues in the provincial board would conduct a separate investigation of the issue. He said toll fees had been surging there officials to do something about the MNTC plan.

"Sure, big businesses are complaining. Their delivery trucks will have to pay much higher toll fees," he said.

Another Pampanga lawmaker, Rep. Reynaldo Suarez, and Sen. Fernando Mayor Oscar Rodriguez are also opposing the toll rate increase.

They said the planned P195 toll fee for cars and small vehicles for a distance of only about 80 km from Balintawak, Quezon City, to Mabalacat, Pampanga is Pampanga was "too high."

Rodriguez said the increase would not be compatible with the national government's Central Luzon Global Gateway program, which aims to integrate the whole part of Subic, the Clark airport and the various economic zones in the region.

The program aims to develop a world class economic corridor comprising of municipal, commercial, logistics, ecological and cultural tourism activities.

"I consider the raising of the toll fee unjust. It is true that [a] huge amount of money was used in rehabilitating the NLEX. But the MNTC should find ways to balance the issue [not without] putting much burden on the public," Rodriguez said.

Aquino said the public also deserved to be informed about the MNTC plan to increase its toll rates by about seven times.

Earlier, Jose de Jesus, MNTC president, said that increasing the toll fees was needed for the recovery of his firm's investment.

He said the "smooth and comfortable ride" to be provided by the highway and its "state-of-the-art facilities" would justify the higher toll rates.

The MNTC is scheduled to take over the expressway's management and operations by December or the first quarter of next year.

Sachez, Transportation Undersecretary Arturo Valdez told reporters that the government could not do anything to stop the increase in toll rates.

Valdez said the MNTC had entered into a "special toll operating agreement" with the Tollway Authority Board, exempting the agency to guarantee the MNTC's right to increase the toll fees it would collect from motorists using the NLEX.

He also said the MNTC had used its special toll-operating agreement as a guarantee in securing loans to fund the expansion and rehabilitation of the expressway.

The MNTC is a joint venture company formed by First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., the Philippine National Construction Corp., and the Hi-Eisen Group (Taiwanese).

The firm has been rehabilitating and expanding the 83.7 km expressway at a cost of P271 million. The project includes the construction and rehabilitation of 14 interchanges, 29 bridges and 35 overpasses from Balintawak to the Sta. Ines exit in Mabalacat, and the operation of the 8.8 km expressway in Subic.

The Lopez Group owns majority of MNTC, while PNCC, which has been operating the expressway since the 1990s, has a minority stake in the company. Aaz Mad ig, PNN Central Luzon Desk

## C. Mindanao workers get ₱20 daily wage hike; farm workers get ₱10

COTABATO CITY—The Regional Wages and Productivity Board granted a ₱20-daily wage increase to workers in the non-agriculture sector and ₱10 for agriculture workers.

Cyril Titan, labor director for Central Mindanao and board chairperson, said the new wage order would take effect only in January next year.

Titan said the ₱20 additional pay would be given to non-agriculture workers receiving a daily rate of ₱200 and below. The prevailing minimum wage in the region is ₱170 per day, plus ₱30 cost of living allowance (COLA) for non-agriculture workers.

With the new wage order, non-agriculture workers would then take home pay of ₱220.

Joel Gonzales, RTWPB board secretary, explained that effective Sept. 1, the ₱6 provision-emergency relief allowance (Peta) would be integrated into the ₱170 basic minimum wage.

This would the present fixed wage rates would apply to workers and employees in the private sector, regardless of position, designation or status of employment and irrespective of the methods by which their wages are paid.

Not covered by the ₱20 daily wage increase and Cola are household or domestic helpers, persons employed in the personal service, like family drivers, and workers of certified Barangay Micro Business Enterprises.

Gonzales explained that the board came up with the new order following consultations with labor and management sectors in the cities of Cotabato, Koronadal, Surigao and General Santos.

Dante Tan Ahong, owner of a chain of grocery stores in Cotabato City, said the business community and other employers were expected to comply with the new wage law.

However, he said, some traders, especially those suffering from the losses of increases in oil prices, transport and service costs, might find it hard to comply with the law.

In Cagayan de Oro City, the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board also approved separate sets of wage increase for workers in Northern Mindanao.

In Davao in fast growing areas, workers would get ₱30 per day while those in other areas would receive ₱5. Both adjustments took effect on Thursday.

The RTWPB said it considered the current inflation rate, increase in fares and other economic indicators in setting the increases.

It also ordered the integration of the P1.5 Cola it had earlier granted into the new wage orders. Edwin Fernandez and Bruce Conrad Alburo, PDN Mindanao Bureau

## Power rates hiked in Capiz

ROXAS CITY—Starting Sept. 1, power rates in Capiz will increase by 59 centavos per kilowatt hour when the Capiz Electric Cooperative (Capelco) starts implementing the unbundling of its rates.

Edgar Gan Capelco general manager, said the unbundling was mandated under Republic Act 9136, also known as the Power Industry Reform Act (Epira), which was approved on June 8, 2001 by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

He said the Energy Regulatory Commission has authorized the implementation of the unbundled rates starting next month to all electric cooperatives and distribution utilities in the country, such as the Transmission Company and Transmission Co. (formerly the National Power Corp.).

Under the unbundling of rates, charges will be broken down into different components, such as generation, transmission, distribution, supply, franchise tax and universal charge.

The Epira also authorizes the implementation of the universal rate, which is collected to pay for the shortfall in the fixing areas, unrecouped rehabilitation under an "environmental fund," and costs incurred by the government, the Transco and other distribution companies as a result of the restructuring of the power industry.

Gan told reporters in a press conference here Friday that the unbundling of rates would determine the "true cost" of the power services.

In the case of Capelco, the average increase would be 26 percent, or 59.1 centavos. The present rate is ₱2.26/per kWh.

Where the unbundling of rate is implemented already, the rate will increase by ₱2.85/kilowatt hour.

Capelco has 95,107 consumers and served 46.2 of the 47.3 barangays of Capiz.

Felipe Celino, PDN Visayas Bureau

# Virus destroys abaca plantations in Negros

By Rusty S. Arimado
PhilNews Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Millions of pesos worth of abaca in Negros Oriental have been damaged due to abaca mosaic, a viral infection caused by aphids.

The infection destroys the fiber and makes the plants yellowish.

Nora Lucero, provincial officer of the Fiber Development Authority (Fida) in Negros Oriental, said the bureau has identified the incidence of abaca plantations in the towns of Valencia and Sibulan but so far town infected with abaca mosaic.

Each hectare earns between P20,000 and P60,000 yearly, depending on the quality of the plant, she said.

At least 12,000 hectares of land in the towns of Valencia, Sibulan, Pamplona, San Jose, Amlan, Dumaguete, Jimalalud, Bindoy, Manjuyod and Guihulngan, and in Bais City have been planted with abaca, with around 1,000 farmers depending on the industry as main source of income.

One hectare can produce 1,000 kilograms of abaca in a year.

Lucero said the destruction of abaca plants was particularly devastating to Valencia since the town has been exporting around 200 tons of "marilina grade" of abaca fiber yearly.

The abaca fiber in Valencia can commend P60,000 to P80,000 per ton, she said.

The abaca in Sibulan produces the so-called Isora fiber or pulp, which is used as the main ingredient of paper. Its price ranges from P20,000 to P30,000 per ton. Aside from fiber and pulp, the by-products of abaca such as pseudo stem, bark and decorations, are exported to the United States, Japan, France and Italy.

Lucero said the economic potential of the industry is certainly very bright that is why there was an impressive level of interest lately to immediately address the concern.

She said the Fida, together with the provincial government, would immediately start the campaign to eradicate the disease since the disease spreads rapidly.

Lucero said infected plants would have to be totally destroyed by "muging," or by administering chemicals to the roots. "We cannot uproot one by one the affected plants because of their number. That is why we have to do the muging," she said.


SONY

sonyhi-fi
powered for clarity

Sony DVD Hi-Fi Components

10,000W PMPO

MHC-GNX60

5,400W PMPO

MHC-GN660

For excellent picture and sound quality.

DVD VIDEO

3,200W PMPO

MHC-RV777

4,400W PMPO

MHC-MZ860

3,500W PMPO

MHC-RV660

4,800W PMPO

MHC-RV999D

Fast forward to the future of digital entertainment & relive the excitement of the movies with Sony's DVD Hi-Fi components. Films will come alive enhanced by sharper images, cutting-edge technology & outstanding audio quality.

POWERED for CLARITY


## Diseases stalk malnourished kids in GenSan

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The City Nutrition Council said diseases were stalking at least 3,000 malnourished children in 15 villages here.

Based on a survey and monitoring report conducted by the council, the children were suffering from severe to moderate malnutrition.

The CNC said parents cited lack of food as the main cause of malnutrition.

However, the CNC team came up with its own observation that the reasons for the onset of malnutrition in the villages included the parents' lack of nutrition awareness, especially on breastfeeding.

Dr. Rose Acharon, council action officer and concerned teachers in household food habits for complete nutrition and for a stronger immune system.

Acharon said breastfeeding could start right after a child is delivered. But parents, especially those who are offered it, she said, feed infants food supplements when the babies reach six months.

Acharon said breastfeeding and a proper diet would help children overcome malnutrition.

Nga Tee Ene, executive Fantastic Sheets Catabon, Ltr District said parents could hardly provide children's needs as "it's better if a family would limit the number of their children to just two."

But Catabon said the proposed two-child policy could not stop the country's rapid population growth.

She said what the government should do is educate the people. *Agaches Z. Zamio, PNP Mindanao Bureau*

## 5 dead in mishap

STA. ROSA, Laguna—Five persons died and 13 others were wounded when the service vehicle of Maxell Philippines hit a big accident here at the roadside in Barangay Don Jose here over the weekend.

Sta. police chief Supt. Eduardo Sangat identified the fatalities as Jun Mark Enos, Jaypee Ishipol, Carlos Mahipitan, Ernesto Montero and a certain Perico.

He said 19 others, including the driver, Jeamont Tagay, suffered cuts and abrasions and were brought to nearby hospitals.

All the victims were contractual employees of Maxell, which produces car spare parts for Honda-Omnikay group of companies, police said.

Sangat said the vehicle was traversing the national road at around 6:30 p.m. as he negotiate workers home after a day's work from the company's main facility here. The Laguna Technopark in Biñan town where the accident happened.

While approaching the traffic light at a junction, Sangat said, Tagay lost control of the wheel, sending the vehicle straight into the huge tree.

Mahipitan and Mahipitan, who was sitting in the front seat, died on the spot. The four others died on their way to the Perpetual Medical Hospital.

"The impact was just enormous. The vehicle sustained heavy damages. Anyone who sees the van would not believe that the driver survived the accident," Sangat said.

Police said they had yet to establish the reason why Tagay lost control of the wheels. Investigators said some witnesses saw the van racing against another chartic bus." *Marlon Ramos, PNP Intel Serv Luzon Bureau*

# Lawmakers support inquiry into media killings

DAVAO: Jose walks past relatives Gibson and Alexis left shoulders during an indignation rally against the killing of journalists.

LONDON (AP)—At least three American lawmakers have declared support for a congressional inquiry into the failure of the Philippine National Police and the judiciary to solve a single case of the 55 journalists slain since 1986.

"The rising incidence of media killings is really alarming. With 55 murdered journalists of media, unsolved since 1986, the government should not simply ignore and sweep the matter under the rug. The police have a lot to explain," said Rep. Rafael Mariano (Democrat-D.) in a phone interview.

Rep. Bonifacio Bosano (Democrat-Virgin Islands) said he would support any petition from media groups that wanted Congress to investigate the murders.

Rep. Proscor Miralis (second district) said he would also support the investigation.

City Councilor Nick Rolin, whose also controls press releases, slated the Manila-based media organization "to clue up and shake the leadership of the national government" to wake them up on the dangerous plight of journalists and media workers.

"The war zones are in the provinces where the local governments are slowly being wiped out by the powers that be, whether in the government or from the underground state formations. Those Manila-based media agencies should act before it's too late for their local counterparts," Rolin said in his media program yesterday morning.

"The provincial media practitioners would soon become an endangered human species," he added.

In a statement, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) chapter in the province also criticized a plan by military officials in Mindanao to deploy soldiers as journalists.

"After Mindanao, where next? That proposal was stupid and would not serve any to protect media practitioners," the group said.

"It would only serve the scheming designs of the ruined Forces to flash counter-insurgency operations at the expense of the media."

Johnny Ghosts, NUJP spokesman chair, said the organization would immediately contact members of the fourteen local media to map out plans and not to any measures on how to address the spate of media killings.

"Two weeks ago, the killing happened in Batangas, the other day, it was in Laguna. What's next, Quezon?" he said before a group of provincial reporters assembly meeting.

"We should all remember that the killing of Rolly Pobeda has remained unsolved and now here comes a new round making media workers shooting targets," he added.

Pobeda, a commentator of radio-DWSI, was gunned down on May 17 last year while aboard his motorcycle on his way to the radio station. (Pobeda Mitchel Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau)

# Kin mourn death of Veritas reporter

VICTORIA, Laguna—Relatives of the slain Radio Veritas correspondent Fernando Consignado, 50, appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo and law enforcers to bring the culprits to justice and give peace to their loved one.

Apolonia Consignado-Lubiag, 54, sister of the victim, said the happiest time the nine Consignado siblings had until united on their homestead's frontline care of their land.

She said her brother was a man of peace. "I do not know of any report of any brother, whose stories were genuinely Church oriented and about development, that could hurt and antagonize anybody."

"What we know now that our family was involved in a court battle over land disputes which any brother Fernando wanted to settle justly," Lubiag said.

Fernando's sister said her slain brother's undue had to be undertaken Veritas soon for extensive coverage security and because all their siblings agreed that their brother be buried beside their late father's grave at the Garden of Angels cemetery.

Julie Consignado-Varela, 50, daughter of Fernando, said she would not believe her father's execution death until reported to police to assist authorities to help them find speedy justice.

Varela said the last time her father is Manila, the elder sister, Gina, 52, had just called to him on Sunday before he died. He had requested for her help because once her mobile phone was malfunctioning.

"Never did we realize that my father's life was in danger, but we did not see coming that my father would die a violent death," Varela said.

Lubiag said the last job for her brother to come his whole life seemed to be very sad. His first marriage to Kathlina Ida ended where their two daughters, Aldea and Liza, were up 6 and 2 years old.

Fernando last another partner, Lenny Arvelo, and they had a daughter, Donna, who is now 21 and a professional. The relationship did not also last.

Another partner, Aurora Pinalilla, gave birth to Fernando's son, Jerem, who is now in Grade 4.

Haroldito Consignado, 49, younger brother of the victim, expressed sadness that Fernando, whom he knew to be peace-loving and person opted with serving the public in media, died a painful death.

"I ask Him's authorities to help us seek justice for [our] slain brother although I am not perfectly sure that my brother did not expect people in his work as a reporter. I don't think he deserved to die the way he did," Haroldito said.

Lubiag said Fernando started broke for about 15 years as a correspondent and was a reporter of a media owned by the Philippine National Police for helping a 5-year-old child in Negros Occ. who was a victim of rape. (Rolando Peña, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau)

# Logging equipment, timber seized in Maguindanao watershed

COTABATO CITY—Environmentalists seized high quality timber products and logging equipment inside a critical watershed in Maguindanao on Thursday afternoon said.

Lalad Kilday, community-environment officer of Bagocalanan I. A. said local guards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources seized chainsaws apprehending some 2,000 board feet of cut lumber and two horse-duty chainsaws.

The seizure happened just as the environment group, Save Gitagum-Bulol-Bulol Apoy (Salabol), held a water conservation summit on Aug. 12.

Kilday said civilian-backed operatives against illegal logging in Maguindanao became "part of a continuing list of cooperation among stakeholders of the Datu-Piang Watershed, which traverses the towns of Datu Odin Sinsuat, North Upi and South Upi, and the city, in efforts to curb rampant illegal logging and encroachment."

The Army's Task Force Pagsi, which is based in Datu Odin Sinsuat, also helped residents and government forest guards in the anti-illegal logging operations in the watershed. Watershed that led to the apprehension of the products and equipment.

The summit garnered private groups, residents, government representatives, peacekeepers, and law enforcers into considerable discussion on fighting rampant water shortage and prevention of wars in the 43,000-hectare watershed.

Residents said authorities also worked together in rescuing watershed intruders to prevent what they said was the emergence of "new typhoons" in Cotabato.

Lawyer Datu Hakim, head of the Office-Cotabato Police District, said Sultan Kudarat police negotiated for the surrendered of around 200 families from the area.

Hakim said the families, mostly migrants from Luzon and Visayas, were given financial assistance to return to their home provinces.

Kilday said the families were also given livelihood assistance.

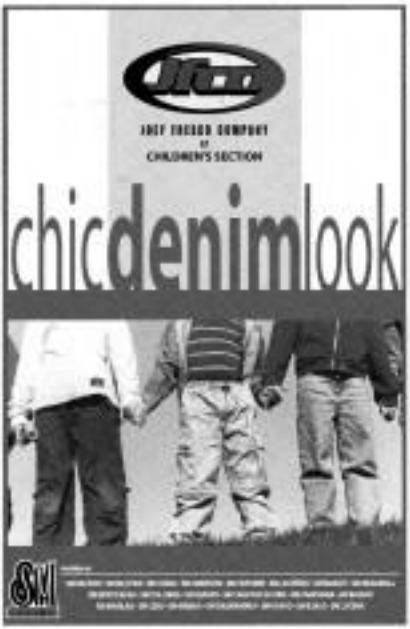
Meanwhile, Kilday said the Army's 601st Brigade based in Awang, and 103rd Base also in Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, have been tasked to help in the protection of the watershed.

Col. Alfredo Cayton, commander of the Army's 601st Brigade based in Awang, and 103rd Base also in Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, has been tasked to help in the protection of the watershed.

Cayton said the campaign would focus on Maguindanao, Kidapawan and Makilala in Cotabato, including Polomolok town in Sultan Kudarat, areas where illegal logging activities are rampant.

"What we can go all-out against illegal loggers with the deputation order coming from the DENR. This is what we've been waiting for," Cayton said.

"The military officials said the only exception [for] this would not be illegal logging in the watersheds of Bukidnon and Sultan Kudarat," Kilday said. (Rolando Peña, PDI Mindanao Bureau)

# Bible, shaving kit for NPA captives

Front page A1

**had sent her a text message, telling her that his** [illegible] **team would have an operation at Tiboan** [illegible] **town in Camarines Sur.**

**"He even asked me to send him a** [illegible] **photo) [and as he could call me," she re-]called. "But I never heard from him again or** [illegible] **more than a week later. He phoned me and asked me to seek help."**

**From the preparations of their anxious families, the audience they will get won't** [illegible] **quite rival that which Dr. Jo Cruz got in his hometown in Pampanga last month when he** [illegible] **returned after being saved by the government** from a beheading by Islamic militants in Iraq.

Church bells pealed, locals struck up such iconic music, and Jo la Cruz's village of Bacolor erupted into dancing when he came home.

"Only a spokesman is not against it," Mr. Marcos can detail "the release," Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (LP, Camarines Sur), the chief broker in the negotiations with the NPA, told The Inquirer yesterday.

## 'Not as lavish as Olympics'

Andaya said that he received on Friday two letters from Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Lito Adamboni, chief peace negotiator of the communist-led National Democratic Front, regarding the suspension of offensive military operations by the two sides.

"It [cease-fire] took effect 12:01 this morning (yesterday)," Andaya said. "Overall, the duration is 14 days. The ceasefire within it effective seven days after the release, and the agreement is for Fidelino and Nemesio to be released within 72 hours after the current ceasefire took effect."

Asked to confirm the location of the release site, he said: "Since like-wise are within the control and prerogative of the NDF as the party in custody of the two."

"What I can only say is that it [release] will not be as lavish as seen in the opening of the Olympics," Andaya said.

## A daughter's birthday

Unhappily for Fidelino and his family and relatives, the agreed ceasefire is followed, he may see he would when his first-born, Alex Nicole, celebrates her second birthday at their home in San Isidro in. The child's birthday is today.

The government had been working to have Fidelino and Nemesio released in time for the birthday.

Lodi has prepared a shaving kit for her husband, who has grown a full beard since he and Nemesio were captured by the NPA inside Diliman Command.

Along with the shaver will be a newly pressed military uniform Fidelino will wear when he and Nemesio are presented in President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang.

"Of course, I want him to look handsome

again so I'll put him a nice shave and a clean uniform," Lodi said in Filipino.

## A Bible for the soldier

Lodi is also shopping for the best "bangus" (milkfish) in the can grill with onions and tomatoes, Fidelino's favorite.

In Nemesio's case, his brother Mariano has bought a Bible for the "deeply Catholic" soldier.

"I couldn't think of a better gift than a Bible," the brother told the Inquirer. "It's our family's way of thanking the good Lord for securing the safe release of my brother."

Fried chicken from a popular fast-food chain where Nemesio had worked in Cotabato City would say a nice welcome, the brother said.

Mariano said he would prefer that his brother's sweetheart, Irene, join the simple celebration. But he said he had her coach with her.

Nemesio was supposed to marry Irene in late March—except that he was captured about a month before the wedding bells were ringing.

Relief came to Fidelino's and Nemesio's families only a few days ago when Mr. Arroyo on 9 day night ordered the suspension of police and military operations in Bicol, where the two officers are believed being held.

## Sleepless nights

The suspension was the condition that the NPA and the NDF had set to allow for the safe [illegible] of the captives to their families and to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Before Mr. Arroyo's announcement, there was only gloom in the Fidelino household and in Nemesio's home in a mountainous town in Agusan del Sur.

Since her husband's capture, Lodi had been gripped by fear that the communist rebels might harm him.

"I often wake up in the middle of sleep and just cried," she said. "I was afraid that he would no longer come back."

Mariano was even cautious about giving details of his brother's captors. Their parents, both farmers in Agusan, are weak and sickly and they might not be able to handle the bad news, he said. Still, they had to know.

## Once worked at jailbird

"Our mother is always crying," he said. In her mind, her son didn't deserve the misfortune.

The 24-year-old Nemesio, the eleventh in a brood of 12, joined the Armed Forces more than two years ago purely for financial reasons.

His family was too poor to support his education—he stopped as a junior medical technology student and worked as a waiter-steward at Jollibee in Cotabato. But his income was barely enough to support even himself, so he joined the military.

Through all their financial difficulties, Mariano said his family, especially Nemesio, would get by through prayers. And those, he is sure, would bring his brother and Fidelino back.

Andaya said the ceasefire would cover Abra and Camarines Sur, where the release was expected to be made.

He said the two soldiers would be received by himself, government chief peace negotiator Silvestre Bello III, and AFP/CHR representatives.

Peace talks between the government and NDF were supposed to restart late this month.

## Peace talks

The NDF however, put off the scheduled talks after the US government again classified the Philippine communist rebels as terrorists.

"The release of the two captives can be a good beginning for both sides to consider resuming the peace negotiations," Andaya said.

The lawmaker is confident that there will not be any last-minute hitches which could derail the release of the two soldiers.

"If Angelo de la Cruz can pushed out of a hole in a faraway land, why can't we do the same for two guys who are right in our own backyard?" Andaya said.

"If the government pulled out its troops from Iraq, I know that it will pull back its troops from its own territory temporarily."

## Janes skeptical

Despite the impending release of the two "prisoners of war," communist leader Jose Maria Sison still could not help but express skepticism that the Arroyo administration would return the gesture by freeing political prisoners.

"Don't be too sure about the release of political prisoners who have been detained on false charges of common crimes and in violation of the [illegible] political offense doctrine. The GRP is notorious for promising such releases and reneging on the promise," Sison said in response to an e-mailed question on whether or not the release of political prisoners would help the peace negotiations.

The NDF is seeking the release of several political prisoners, including the "Mambayo 6" and the alleged killers of Us Army Col. James Rowe.

Sison said that, in addition to freeing political prisoners, the Arroyo administration should make a public statement that, in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration, acts of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the NPA and himself, "are beyond the jurisdiction of the US government."

In an earlier interview, Sison stressed that the rebel movement "is not willing to negotiate under duress"—referring to the "terrorist" tag imposed by Washington on the CPP/NPA and himself. With reports from Joyce U. Muñoz I., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

COMPOSER Carmen "Pinky" Valdes (left) with singer Joey Albert. (CONTRIBUTED)

# Former 'Singing Nun' offers songs of hope

(From page A-1)

...Dorothy Stone and Fantasy studios in San Francisco.

Being meant to get her message across comes naturally to this mestiza, whose mother was of Spanish-English blood and whose father, an airline executive, was Hispanoyanggan.

Valdes grew up in a household in Old Alta Mesa, where the children were prodded to play musical instruments. She was playing the piano at age six, and switched to the guitar at 12. At 15, she wrote her first composition.

## Singing nun

At "Sacrampentosa" (now grade school), Valdes entered the convent in her second year in college. She joined the faculty, teaching literature, religion and music. She became known on campus as "The Singing Nun," which endeared her to the students.

In 1975, she left the religious life after 14 years. "It could say I was an enigmatic, love-spirited person, and it came to a point where it was difficult for me to stay in that kind of a structure," she said. "But Father James Reuter once told me as he held my face in his hands, 'You are still very much a nun at heart.' My leaving the convent had nothing to do with my relationship with God, who is the passion of my life."

Valdes worked for the Bureau and Radio group of companies through the 1970s and early 1980s. She moved to the US in 1986. By then she had also worked as manager for Buffet Philippines and marketing director for the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

But she maintained close ties with Assumption. She visits the Philippines at least once a year, and continues to work with the alumni association. She is also a favorite lecturer and speaker during the school's retreats.

She never parted with her music, either. Now outside the local recording industry [illegible] that she collaborated on several hit songs popularized in the 1990s by the award-winning singer-composer Jose Mari Chan, a long-time personal friend.

## Miracles

On Oct. 19, 2002, two days after a sprawling engagement-cum-birthday-cum-anniversary-cum-jubilee celebration, Valdes suffered a stroke and had to stay in a hospital here for about a month.

"I should have died," she said. To the doctors' amazement, she recuperated—and in record time. Her conclusion was: "God wanted me alive. I thought [maybe] He wanted me to record my songs and communicate a message of hope."

"Inadulwood" is a collection of songs that Pinky wrote before and after the stroke. She penned all the lyrics and, for some of the tunes, also the music.

The four interpreters are led by pop star Joey Albert, who is now based in Canada and has her own "miracle" story in relation to the project.

Albert was fighting a second bout with cancer when she attended her dance of the stricken in December last year. When they first met in dream "Inadulwood," Valdes recalled, she couldn't see how Albert could sing.

"Her mouth was full of sores," the songwriter recounted. "So I told her we would wait till she had finished the prescribed six chemotherapy sessions. But she said no, she'd do it after the third. And this is the miracle: she had no sores when she showed up for the recording! But right after the [sessions], all the sores came back."

Joining Albert onstage for the 31,000-person concert tomorrow are former talents mates Marilen Liwag Bramhills, Ces Campbell and Londivoe Lumapas Ramos. Gerry Lazard is a guest performer.

Beneficiary groups are the US-based Medfund ministries, which makes annual visits to the Philippines; the Chosen Children's Village Foundation for abandoned and disabled kids; the Tahanang Walang Hagdanan; and the Assumption Mission in Pedrebon.

Valdes said the CD will actually have four launchings: from August to November, with the three others set in San Francisco, New York and Vancouver. A Tagalog version, currently in the works, will be released in October.

# 'Fastest' judge among 6 Gender Justice awardees

(From page A-1)

...the Regional Trial Court Branch 21 here had been previously cited for his speedy disposition of cases: 204 in 1997, at an average rate of 30 a month. He also holds the national record for having only six pending cases at year's end, in 2001.

This time around, the citation is for "rendering gender-sensitive decisions on VAW [violence against women] cases"—without prejudice to the [illegible] speed, of course.

To put it mildly, Gumay is the exact opposite, easily 10 times over—all right, 100—of Cebu-ista Judge Jaime T. Hamoy, who set records for trial cases by 23 years.

The GJA is being given by the University of the Philippines' Center for Women's Studies, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, and other civic and women's organizations "amid the continuing practice of many judges and prosecutors to perpetuate the misconceptions against women victims of violence in their decisions."

Awarding rites are set on Wednesday at the Discovery Suites in Pasig City, with Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as keynote speaker.

Judge Ma. Nenita Primo-Sikaya of the Misamis Occidental RTC topped the list. Judges Gumay and Judge Ebida Patricia de Leon-Diaz are the winners from Luzon; Edgar Gaerlan from the Visayas; Jacob Malik Tenn Mindanao; and Teotimo Ray Jeno the National Capital Region.

The board of judges included former Justice Leonor Luciano; Sheila Coronel, executive director of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism; and lawyer Lorna Kapunan of the Women's Business Council.

A special award will be given to Judge Ibrahim Arabani Sr. of the Shari'a Court in Mindanao, and two "novelty" awards to Judges Anthony Santos and Edgardo de los Santos. The organizers said 11 other judges will receive plaques of recognition.

## Unprecedented feat

A native of San Nicolas, Pangasinan, Gumay finished law at the University of the Philippines. He served as councilor in his hometown from 1972 to 1992. He also practiced law for 20 years, after which he was appointed to the judiciary in 1996—first as presiding judge, then as executive judge of the RTC.

In 1999, he received the Outstanding Filipino Achiever award for his "remarkably quick" disposition of cases in his sala.

He is also a recipient of the Presidential Lingkod Bayan Award from the Civil Service Commission in October 2002; Chief Justice Ceyetano Artillano Award for Judicial Excellence in June 1992; Regional Centennial Judge Award from the Supreme Court in 2001; and the Outstanding RTC Judge of the Millennium in 2000.

On Aug. 30, 2003, he brought his case load down to zero, an unprecedented feat, when he penned his 577-page decision on a celebrated rape case.

The Supreme Court assigned Gumay to hear 33 cases of The Rapids Country Club involving the Roxas family, after judges in Baguio City reportedly exhibited themselves, or were disqualified.

He said he finished 32 of the cases in eight months, and that he expected to decide the last one in about two weeks.

# AFP wants to exhume body of bandit leader

[illegible] Basilan Lantern told the Inquirer.

Lantern gave his assurance to Tablo's relatives and all Muslims that their "religious and cultural sensibilities would be respected" in case the body was exhumed.

Lantern also said that exhuming the body was an option to prevent a repetition of the controversy which accompanied the death of former Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sabaya.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself had announced that Sabaya was shot dead in a sea encounter with the military in 2002 but his body also was not recovered, triggering speculation that he had survived the encounter.

The military could only produce Sabaya's fingernails and other personal belongings.

The military and police have insisted that Tablo was killed and ignored reminders as telling soldiers that the man was buried Friday night in line with the Islamic custom which requires a Muslim to be buried within 24 hours of his death.

The military yesterday said one of Tablo's wives confirmed the Pentagon gang leader was killed during the military assault.

Col. Agustin Dolor Jr., chief of the 6th Infantry Battalion, told the reporters the cinnamic were immediately buried by his followers in Sitio Tatak in Maluso.

Tablo's Christian wife, Aisha, a native of Isabela town in South Cotabato, confirmed his death, Dolor also said.

Aside from Aisha, Tablo had a wife named Theresia, a resident of Pinamalayan, Lanao Del Sur, Sultan Kudarat. He reportedly had three other wives.

But Deputy Director Gen. Victor Ela, head of the police Task Force Mindanao which led the assault, said there was need for exhumation if only to prove that Tablo was dead.

### Eyewitnesses

Gil said that at least five residents, who purportedly witnessed the burial, had volunteered to execute sworn statements and testify about Tablo's presence in authorities.

"Abutin Tablo is dead and we have several witnesses to prove it," Gil said.

He said obtaining the witnesses' sworn statements was also important so that the government could counter the issue "raised" by the Philippine National Police had used in identifying the whereabouts of Tablo and his slain followers.

Tablo and six other Pentagon gang members were buried in the morning of Aug. 13 in Sitio Tatak, Barangay Mohammadiyah, Sit Omkudan, Maguindanao, according to a PNP report.

The bodies of eight other slain gang members were taken by relatives and buried the same night in nearby Liguasan March, the same report said. In all, there were 13 kidnappers, including Tablo, killed in the Friday attack.

The report identified the other fatalities as Bangcon Ampatuli, Bil Bidarlin, Yapakan Dorig, and Alvarez Bonnie, Kumbang, Casupo, Tamboh, Bong, Bernie, Rex, Caballero, Tabo, Pangdag-Tang and Bashi.

### Big blow to terrorists

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu had told the Inquirer and ABS-CBN television that Tablo survived the bombing of his hideout but was seriously wounded.

The military and police said that the more important than question about Tablo's death was that Friday's attack dealt a big blow to kidnappers and terrorists in the country.

"It sent a very strong signal that Tablo's no safe haven for terrorists here in the Philippines, that the government will get them wherever they hide," Gil said.

The Pentagon is no ordinary kidnap gang. It has been linked to some high-profile abductions in recent years, such as those of Italian priest Giuseppe Pierucci, five Chinese engineers and a South Korean tourism [illegible]

*Christian S. Esguerra in Manila, Rosa Rivas V. de Guzman and Agaton C. Jones, PhilStar.com Bureau*

# Gov't-MILF peace talks to resume

A new round of peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is to begin in Malaysia this week, a rebel spokesperson said yesterday.

"We look forward that a cordial meeting," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said. "We hope to sign some agreements to further boost the peace process and end the hostilities in Mindanao."

Government negotiators would not be immediately named for comment, and Kabalu did not give specific dates for the talks.

The MILF has been fighting for an independent Muslim state in the South since 1978.

It signed a ceasefire agreement with the government in 2002, but allegations that it had links to the Southeast Asian terrorist Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) militants, who had been blamed for the October 2002 Bali bombings, had hindered the peace process.

Among the requested talking points is the MILF's demand for a total withdrawal of troops from Buliok, the former rebel camp in central Mindanao that was overrun by the military in 2000.

MILF negotiators are also expected to demand the dropping of criminal charges against several MILF leaders accused of plotting the deadly 2002 bombings of an airport and a wharf in Davao City that left seven dead. AFP

# RP finance sleuth stalks terrorists

[illegible] death threats by telephone, he said.

Inclined after the Philippines passed the landmark Anti-Money Laundering Act in October 2001, the countries the government's financial intelligence agency.

Aquino, a former university lecturer who began his law enforcement career as a rough-as-nails state prosecutor in Manila, became the country's financial sleuth after taking a six-month assignment and other personnel training.

The agency was formally created in March 2002 and started operations six months later.

Its initial staff complement was only 10 people, but it has since grown to 50 with the hiring of 40 more employees.

Aquino said the agency's budget for this year was P100 million.

He said the agency would be requesting an additional P50 million for next year.

Aquino said the agency was also in the process of acquiring a computer system that would enable it to receive reports from banks and other financial institutions electronically.

The agency is now receiving reports on cash transactions that exceed the P500,000 threshold and P4,000 daily threshold.

Aquino said the agency has received 1,500 suspicious transaction reports from banks and other financial institutions.

Of this number, 1,000 reports were received in the last six months.

He said the agency has received reports on transactions involving more than P1 billion.

Aquino said the agency has been receiving reports from banks and other financial institutions since January this year.

He said the agency has been receiving reports from banks and other financial institutions since January this year.

He said the agency has been receiving reports from banks and other financial institutions since January this year.

He

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

John Raoul D. Marcelo
Assistant Editor/Carrie S. Martinez

# Finance bucks moratorium on new taxes

By Michaela V. Reyes

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has rejected outright a proposal in Congress to impose a five-year moratorium on the imposition of new taxes, saying such a move would be suicidal for a government facing a serious fiscal crisis.

"It is too much to ask for a ban on new taxes. We cannot solve the budget deficit and save debt problems without the help of new revenue measures," Finance Undersecretary Grace Tan said.

Tan, who is in charge of tax-related matters, said the government understood the public's clamor against new taxes, considering the unprecedented increase in consumer and oil prices. She explained, however, that the government could not help create a better economy for the people if it continued to lack resources.

"This is exactly the reason why we need new taxes. We have to solve the budget deficit to make the economy more forward," Tan said in an interview.

Tan made the statement after Reliance Rep. Pedro Pancho, an administration lawmaker, filed a bill opposing the Arroyo administration's move to push for new taxes. Based on the premise that it is the wrong time to force the public to spend more, House Bill No. 3286 calls for a five-year ban on the imposition of new taxes.

Legislators have argued that the Bureau of Internal Revenue should instead improve the collection of existing taxes, and plug hundreds of billions in tax leakages, instead of imposing new taxes.

The BIR, however, said flaws in the tax code and the pervasive culture of tax evasion hamper the revenue agency from achieving high collection efficiency. The BIR said that while it had already started programs to increase the collection of existing taxes, new measures still needed as the impact of its new programs would not be immediate.

The DOF, the head agency of the BIR, said improving collection of existing taxes would not be enough to solve the budget deficit as scheduled. The imposition of new taxes was necessary, it added.

The government is pushing for the passage of eight revenue-raising measures to help gradually reduce the burgeoning budget deficit and totally wipe it out by the end of President Macapagal-Arroyo's term in 2010.

The measures include a P1-a-liter increase in petroleum taxes, the indexation to inflation of the excise tax on alcohol and cigarettes, a franchise tax on telecommunication firms, the shift from net to gross income tax, an increase in the value-added tax rate, the adoption of a performance-based system of reclassification among government agencies, a tax

(SOURCE TO

## Time running out in averting power crisis

By Abigail L. Ho
(First of a series)

THE SWELTERING heat is making your mind sizzle in thoughts of investment or a cold drink instead of on your work at hand. The current blistic lack of you as you stare at your monitor, unable to work. But you're lucky to even have a computer turning. It is all that the building generator can handle at this point, after almost eight straight hours of a power outage.

Welcome back to the early '90s—when brownouts were the cups (literally and figuratively) and daylight-saving time seemed like one of the best ideas to hit Philippine shores. But this is no "Back to the Future" installment. This could be the country's future, three or four years from the time.

For some months now, talks of a looming power crisis have hounded the headlines or at least have occupied some space in the news. The possibility of something like the 1990s' dark ages making back to haunt the country has also been a subject of discussion among members of the government sector... whether or not they believe that a crisis will actually take place.

Now the Department of Energy, in its 10-year Philippine Energy Plan, acknowledged that a shortfall would occur in Luzon and the Visayas by 2006 and in Mindanao by 2009 if no adequate capacity additions would be made.

But as early as now, the spectre of a power

(CONTINUED ON

SPECIAL REPORT

CURRENCIES

STOCK MARKET

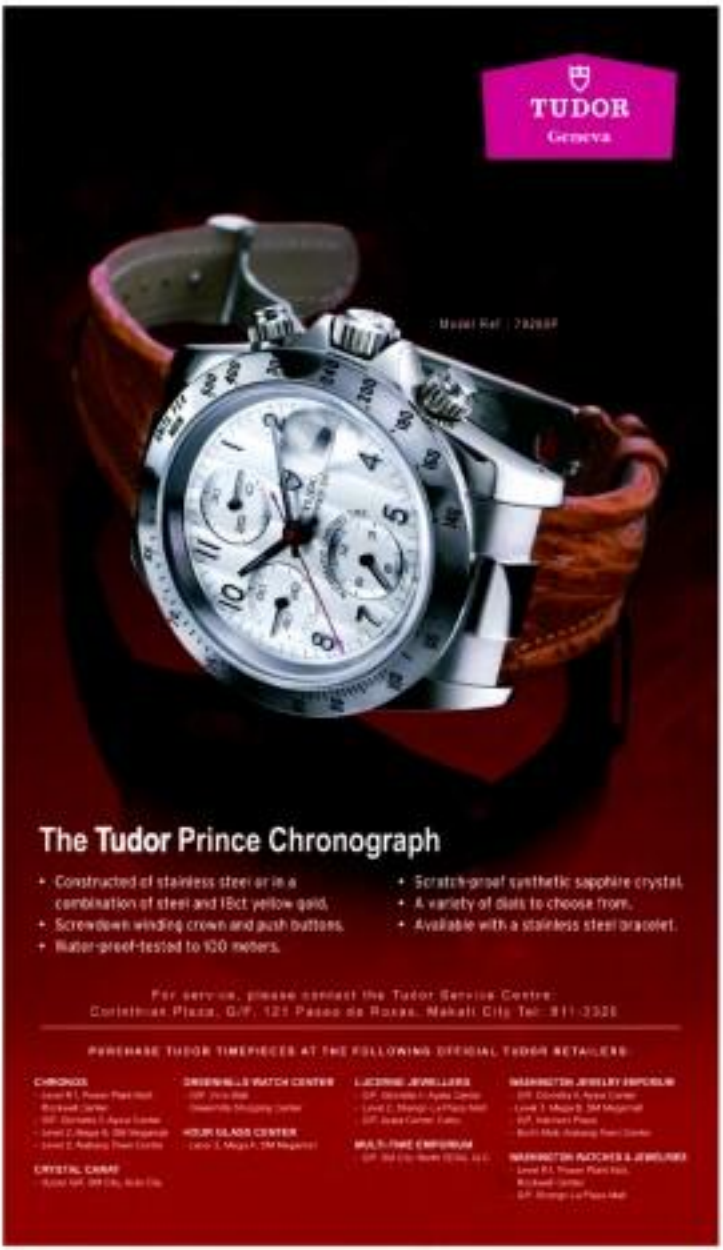
PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Sluggish trading seen

MARKET players are expected to slow down on purchases this week after scooping up bargain stocks last week.

Investment bankers said the three-day losing streak of the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index (Phisix) by 19 points or 0.9 percent to 1,980.63 last week.

Another sideways trading session could ensue early this week, as portfolio fund



# Time running out in averting power crisis

AS LOW AS ₱300 FAX REPAIR
KINGS
376-7983
811-8380

shortage is making life miserable for Visayas and Mindanao residents as resulting brownouts in some parts of the two island power grids are already happening.

Data from the National Power Corp. indicate that the supply-demand gap in Luzon will narrow after 2010, starting with a net reserve of 2,778 megawatts (MW) in 2009. This will then shrink all the way down to 167 MW by 2007, far too small a sufficient amount of reserve for Luzon lids to be assured of stable energy supply.

Demand will start outstripping supply in the country's largest load center by 2008, with a projected capacity shortage of 561 MW.

## Far from hopeless

But the government believes that the capacity can still escape the dark ages, given the proper mix of solutions and cooperation among all stakeholders.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez, while acknowledging the fact that newsen electricity demand is outing up present supply and narrowing the gap between the two, says there is still time to do what should be done to prevent a return to the dark ages of the late '80s and early '90s.

But even with still some luxury of time, he says there's no better time than now to capitalize some real reforms in the sector. These "structural" changes will not only make the power sector more efficient, but will also attract investments in infrastructure investments for additional capacity.

"We believe that the answer we more, the more options we have. Let's not wait for the last minute to react," he says.

One such reform facet is the with the current generation rates of National Power Corp. Napocor). The state firm has been charging its customers very low rates despite the mounting costs of the factors that are considered as power production—fuel and foreign exchange costs.

Since 1995, Napocor's rates have not changed that much. Its average nationwide generation charge in 1995 at 91.40 per kilowatt hour (kWh) is set to be from the current average of ₱2.30 per kWh. This is considering the fact that the price has more than halved in value from the time until now. The cost of fuel and coal has likewise risen over these past nine years.

Also, the state-run power firm has been selling electricity below cost since 2003.

In 2002, Napocor was charging its customers an average of ₱2.97 per kWh. However, its actual power generation cost was pegged at ₱3.37 per kWh. The following year saw the state firm shouldering even less for its electricity at only ₱3.00 per kWh, way below the actual cost of ₱3.64 per kWh.

A cap of 40 centavos per kWh on Napocor's purchased power cost adjustment (PPCA) imposed in 2002 by President Macapagal-Arroyo during her Labor Day speech only served to further increase the state firm's subsidy on the electricity it sells.

Instead of moving closer to the true costs of power generation, no one reflected the government's effort to satisfy the populace. This then led to even more losses for the power firm, resulting in a whopping ₱113.27 billion in 2003.

Napocor data indicate that the same power firm will continue to incur losses up to 2007.

As painful as another power rate hike may be for consumers, Napocor president Regalado Maniga says this is necessary to prevent a comeback of the chronic brownout situation of the early '90s.

## Rate hike a must

"We want to make the rates competitive with respect to ours so we can source out the investment in the construction of plants. We don't want to experience what happened in 1990, 1992 and 1993," he says.

Napocor in June 20 filed a rate hike application with the Energy Regulatory Commission. The petition called for a change in the way the state firm charged its customers for the electricity they consumed.

Upon approval by the ERC, systems rates for customers in the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao grids will double. This will then allow Napocor to achieve a return on rate base (RORB), a measure of profitability, of 8 percent.

For those in Luzon, rates will go up to ₱4.56 per kWh from the current ₱2.57 per kWh (including foreign exchange adjustment). Those in the Visayas will have to pay ₱4.59 per kWh from ₱2.82 per kWh, while customers in Mindanao will have to shell out ₱5.13 per kWh from the existing ₱3.80 per kWh.

Not only will the rate-see power firm achieve an RORB of 8 percent with these new rates. It appeared, these higher rates will also give Napocor a positive operating income, something that the firm has not seen since 2001.

Right now, Napocor has an RORB of negative 1.77.

Maniga believes that with an attractive rate base, investors will be more keen on investing in the power sector. This will then help save the projected power crisis in 2008.

## Blackmail

But militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) sees Napocor's presumptuousness that a rate hike is necessary to prevent a power crisis as nothing short of blackmail.

"The looming power crisis has already been some sort of a trend in Chairperson [Arroyo's] speech every time there is a need to raise power rates or privatize the power sector," Bayan spokesperson Bernie Reyes Jr. says. "It has been used by Manila Electric Co. and Napocor to justify rate hikes in the past."

The present need for a rate increase has less to do with averting a power crisis, he says, is not the Filipino people's fault. Why should they then be the ones to suffer now?

(To be continued)

Ink-mace
Rosanna Ink System
YOUR PRINTERS

Riverview
SEMINAR PROMO
P 785/pax

BEDRIDDEN WITH BEDSORES?
THE EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
CULTURE
WRITING INSTRUMENTS

TOSHIBA
Toshiba recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional
Bestsellers' blowout*.
Best deals and discounts plus great bundles.
Exclusively from COMPLINK
Satellite A40-S435
Model No. PSA40L-07S06
₱96,990
Grab this great deal & more!
Visit the Toshiba Sale & Exhibit Booth
Cyberzone
4th Floor, SM Megamall, Bldg. B
13-18 August 2004
₱8,082.50/month
for 0% interest for 12 months
Free DSLR/D-TAM
Choose freedom

Via Mare
Ayala Center, GREENBELT 1
Our function rooms are now ready to serve you.

ASPHALT VS CONCRETE

# P1.4-B Edsa rehab plan to get new lease on life

By Michelle V. Nieto

THE P1.4-BILLION Edsa rehabilitation project, which is up for ceasefire, may be given another chance.

The Department of Finance has decided to put on hold the planned cancellation of Edsa's rehabilitation after the concerned government agencies agreed to discuss their differences.

"We were advised that discussions are ongoing," Roberto Tan, finance assistant secretary, told reporters over the weekend. "Maybe the problems can be addressed and the project will pursued."

The Edsa rehabilitation, a project approved and funded by the Asian Development Bank, was stalled when the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) objected to the use of asphalt in improving the highway. Preferring the use of concrete, the MMDA locked horns with the Department of Public Works and Highways over the use of asphalt.

Under the ADB project loan, asphalt was the material of choice to be used in the Edsa rehabilitation.

The Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda)—the body that approves or rejects projects to be funded by official development assistance—earlier gave its go signal for the DOF to cancel the project.

The DOF, which handles the government's financial concerns, is the one directly negotiating with lenders, in this case, the ADB.

"The DOF has not yet communicated (its intention to cancel the project) with the ADB," Tan said. Of course, the ADB wants to know what is happening."

Tan said the Neda agreed to put on hold the planned cancellation of the project after the MMDA and the DPWH agreed to discuss their differences. Once the two agencies agree on what material to use, the rehabilitation project will push through.

Should the rehabilitation plan be canceled, the government would ask the ADB to channel the funds to other projects.

Tan said the projects would aim for at least with the objectives of the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program of the ADB.

The Edsa rehabilitation project is a component of the ADB's Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program.

The program aims to address the deteriorating air quality in Metro Manila through the so-called three-year Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).

The AQAP means to: mitigate air pollution from mobile sources; rate air pollution from stationary sources; improve fuel quality; reduce emissions from vehicular use; reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic flow; strengthen ambient air quality monitoring, evaluation, and reporting; intensify public awareness of issues relating to air quality and; strengthen the capacity of concerned institutions.


DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR FINANCE

U.P. College of Business Administration Diliman, Quezon City

*Capital Budgeting, Cost of Capital and Capital Structure*

*September 4, 11 and 18, 2004 (Saturdays)*

Capital investments connect astronomical amounts of company funds on a long-term basis. Any capital investment project, such as, plant expansion, acquisition of new equipment, or replacement of existing ones should be undertaken only after a thorough analysis that takes into consideration cash flows, capital structure and cost of capital, among others.

The three-day seminar covers the following topics:

- Techniques for evaluating capital investment projects (NPV, IRR, etc.)
- Estimating cash flows
- Capital Structure and Dividend Policy
- Cost of Capital; and
- Determining discount rates

For inquiries, please contact the DCF Program Secretariat at 929-0925 929-0926 or 19 local 2106, dcf.cba@up.edu.ph
Avail of our early bird and group discounts



You don't have to wake up with back sores.

BACKREST FOR YOUR BEDREST

- Provides more comfortable sleeping environment
- Prevents bedsores
- Prevents spinal malposition that causes pneumonia
- Reduces the workload for the caregiver who has to constantly move the patient

Quantum Care Medical Products



It's another busy day delivering PCs for rent!

RENTech



Are the mice playing when the cat is away?

Near to you or far, No matter where you are, You can see, with StarEye CCTV.

Star Value Electronics, Inc.

If you have POTS, DSL or CATV We have DVR's and TCP/IP !

Remote Monitoring! Call now!



WE DELIVER!

Hungry for news? The Philippine Daily Inquirer delivers straight to your doorstep. Subscribe now!

Call: 528-0183 528-0186

Philippine Daily Inquirer

# Oil industry re-regulation?

NO FREE LUNCH
*Cielito F. Habito*

I FIND it hard to understand how some people publicly profess dismay that the government—and by extension all of us—would not be willing to do anything right, and yet at the next breath appear to condone such gross ineptitude. If by advocating that certain initiatives be either taken over or regulated by the same supposedly incompetent, corrupt-ridden government.

### The infamous OPSF

Amid the recent spate of oil-price increases, calls for a return to oil industry regulation are now proposing for the establishment of an Oil Price Stabilization Fund (OPSF) as if it was the newest bright idea for dealing with the oil price increases. And yet it was the infamous OPSF that was in fact the centerpiece of the failed price regulation policy both then, for the beneficiaries it gave to economic management that time, we had 8.0-8.5 more gap to call it the Oil Price Destabilization Fund, or alternately, the Oil Price Stabilization Hazard.

### OPSF in theory

In theory, the OPSF sounded like a good idea. The goal was to smoothen out fluctuations in domestic prices of petroleum products, by having establishing prices over a given period even as world crude oil prices moved up or down within the year. When crude oil price rose below the assumed price set within the fixed petroleum product prices were based, oil companies paid the difference into the OPSF, which was administered by the Department of Energy. On the other hand, when crude oil prices went above the basis price, the fund compensated the oil companies for the difference. With proper management and timing of adjustments in the mandated domestic petroleum product prices, payments by companies into the fund should, over time, exactly equal the payments made to the oil companies out of the fund, leading to a zero net balance in the fund throughout.

It sounds all too good to be true—and that is why people who do not realize or understand enough the nature of the problems we had during the oil industry regulation days soon succumbed and broke idea.

### OPSF in practice

But the devil came (and I am certain will again come) in the actual implementation of the scheme. As a former energy official puts it, the OPSF became the "cash cow" of the government, especially when it found itself saddled with huge fiscal deficits, which, in the late 80s and early 90s, was practically all the time—and so it is again now. That is, when the OPSF was in surplus, the government often improperly dipped its fingers into the fund for the pressing needs of the price smoothing mechanism.

Worse, the government consistently failed to adjust petroleum prices upward whenever it was clearly time to do so, i.e. when the OPSF got depleted due to rising world prices of crude. Adjusting domestic petroleum prices to become a responsive policy decision, rather than an objective and technical one which is what it was supposed to be. As government needed to postpone upward price adjustments for populist reasons, especially during election seasons, the OPSF tended to run into huge deficits of billions of pesos. And this occasionally ended up being financed by subsidies from the national treasury, i.e. from general taxpayers' (rather than petroleum consumers') money.

The other result of such unwise turned postponement of appropriate price increases was even more drastic price increases that had to be made when the mounting OPSF deficits made further postponement untenable. And when, over this happened, the public, and especially the aggrieved motorists and transport industry leaders, had only the government to blame.

# Gov't to finalize unified tax perks plan

By Konrad M. Domingo

OFFICIALS of the departments of Trade and Industry and of Finance as well as the National Economic and Development Authority are set to meet this week and finish out details of a proposed unified investment perks law.

Board of Investments managing head Elmer C. Fernandez said in an interview that highlights of the envisioned new investors system included a flexible length of income tax holiday, a single definition of an export-oriented business, and the removal of perpetual incentives after a limited time period.

Fernandez said a bill had been filed in the House of Representatives that aims to consolidate the 146 existing incentives laws.

The official explained that in the proposed single investments system, income tax holidays that are usually good for five years could be made flexible depending on the location of a new investment.

He said the income tax holiday could be as short as four years for a business within Metro Manila, as per for a domestic-oriented business outside the metropolis, and eight years for an export-oriented enterprise.

Fernandez added that all businesses that register with their BOI (their income would be considered export-oriented. The minimum said to vary from 50 to 70 per cent of exports.

Also, he said a "sunset" clause could also be proposed so as a time limit on the granting of tax perks.

Some industries would probably have developed over a certain period to a point where investors are no longer needed to encourage participation, he said.

The BOI chief added that the government was considering to have the Investment Priorities Plan cover three years instead of only one to allow enterprises to plan their projects.

Finally, Ma. Corazon Tiu, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said the government would continue giving incentives to investors as those were still necessary to continue attracting local and foreign businessmen.

Purisima said the proposed investments and Incentives Code sought to have a single incentives law, make it clear, simple, rules-based and performance-based to prevent abuses, and bring in savings as per with those in other countries in the region.

"There is a need to change our incentives system, especially for the purpose of encouraging new investments to locate outside Metro Manila and other established investment areas," he said.

ASUS Servers Continuously Reinvent to Provide Better Business Solutions

With comprehensive line of quality servers- from entry-level to high-end solutions

P 155,900

P 142,800

P 99,500

www.asus.com.ph

Authorized Philippine Distributor
BAMBRIDGE COMMERCIAL, INC.


# Digitel says telecom mart has room for 3 players

By Carlos S. Reina

DIGITEL Mobile Philippines Inc., the Gokongwei group's wireless phone company operating was Cellular, said it would be monitoring new prepaid and postpaid plans during the second half that would allow it to hit a million subscribers by next year's end.

"There is room for three players in such a big market that is growing very fast," Digitel president Lance Gokongwei said in an interview.

He said the company had about 600 cellular sites and would expand the network to between 1,200 and 1,300 by the end of the fourth phase of its roll-out program next year.

Gokongwei said Sun Cellular had about 700,000 subscribers as of the end of the first half, the number barely missed its end-year's level.

But the official said he was not worried about logging the top two players, Globe Telecom Inc. and Smart Communications Inc., which have a combined 26.6 million subscribers as of the first semester.

"We have long legs for the race. Sun Cellular will be surviving in the long run. We will survive the second half so we will hit one million subscribers by the end of the year," Gokongwei said.

He said Sun Cellular would be stepping up its marketing campaign especially toward the fourth quarter when people would have more money to spend.

Sun Cellular had acquired 1.1 million subscribers during its first year of operations in 2002 after launching its product in March last year.

Once the company hits 2 to 3 million subscribers, Gokongwei said it should give Sun Cellular a sufficient critical mass to compete in the out. Digital mobile phone business.

Gokongwei said he said that Digitel would be spending upto P800 million this year and next to expand its cellular phone network by more than 60 percent so it could attract added base of subscribers.

This, he said, would make Digitel the industry's third player to compete more aggressively and address concerns being voiced by some analysts that Sun Cellular's network inadequacy was driving users potential subscribers.

Gokongwei said Sun Cellular remains competitive and our targets stable. We will continue with our network expansion programs," he said.

He admitted that Digitel's losses would peak this year because of investments needed for the wireless business.

"Definitely it [losses] will be bigger than last year's. We remain in red [ink] letter in the next few years. But by the last few months of 2006, we expect to break even," Gokongwei said.

Sun Cellular rolled out 641 cellular sites nationwide last year as part of the first and second phases of its network expansion project.

BTF Holdings Inc., its major investors, in its industry assessment in May said that Sun Cellular would need at least P700 million to improve its network.

Most Sun Cellular was bombarded in March 2003, it required signing up between 3,000 and 4,000 subscribers a day. But initial interest waned as Digitel subscribers complained of poor network coverage hampered by persistent dropped calls and weak signals, according to BTF further.

But despite a forecast of setbacks and losses, Gokongwei said the company was mounting an aggressive marketing strategy to remain fully functional as a strong player.

He disclosed loading system that would allow Sun Cellular subscribers to reload prepaid credits through text messaging from authorized agents would be introduced. Gokongwei said getting into e-loading, which allowed competitors to go deeper into the market, was inevitable for Sun Cellular.

Sun Cellular has cut the cost of international calls to 30 US cents a minute against the 40 US cents offered by competitors. It is offering a postpaid package of as low as P888 a month with a free handset. Prepaid plans include a P6,500 package that entitles the subscriber a rebate of P6,000 to be paid through P200 worth of free load each month.

# Madrigal claim sunk

THE DEFEND Court has responded the damages sum ruled by the Madrigals against engineering Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. over their failed shipping venture.

More than that, the high court, through Justice Antonio Eduardo Nachura, even lectured the Madrigal lawyers about their "absurd" interpretation and statement on the Supreme Court denying a preliminary. Peregrinos said the Madrigal counsels should have filed a simple motion for appeal, in a remedy for their victims setbacks before the Manila Regional Trial Court and the Court of Appeals.

The landed Madrigal family recently through new Sen. Jamby Madrigal, signed a joint-venture agreement with Lorenzo and his related companies before the 1997 currency crisis wherein the Madrigals agreed to provide shipping services for the agricultural produce of the Lorenzo company in their Mamo plantation in Mindanao.

On the strength of the joint venture agreement, Madrigal Transport Inc. borrowed P100 million from a bank to buy a cluster vessel.

The Madrigals claimed Lorenzo and his Legendary Holdings Corp. and Hernandez and Co. failed to deliver the bid Mamo cluster into contracts, and subsequently filed a damage suit in February 1998 before the Manila RTC branch 95.

However, before that, the Madrigal shipping company also filed and was granted to petition for insolvency before another court, Manila RTC Branch 49.

With the Madrigals having been declared insolvent, Lorenzo successfully sought the dismissal of the damage suit. Manila RTC Branch 49 ruled that the Madrigals had lost the right to continue the complaint for damages, as that right now belonged to a court-appointed receiver over the insolvent shipping company.

But instead of filing an appeal, the Madrigals sought the issuance of a contempt, as an extraordinary writ issued by the higher courts to call up the records of a particular case from a lower judicial body.

"Petitioner availed of (the) certiorari (remedy) because the 15-day period within which to file an appeal had lapsed," Justice Peregrinos noted. "Basic is the rule that certiorari is not a substitute for the lapsed remedy of appeal."

Peregrinos then gave the Madrigal lawyers Mylene Mercio-Gutierrez and Gilbert Santos a remedial course on the legal nuances between a certiorari and an appeal.

## Back in the groove again

PEREZPHOBIC convention conferences, which had become an expensive chasing the Ryan years, just might be back in fashion again.

Enter the current corporate earnings and success-stories figures cues for the budget

## COCKTALES

*Victor C. Ayuyao*

deficit, a thing Arroyo-based regional financial magazine The Asset, thanks the Philippines has the makings of a turnaround story first unseen for years of such high-calibre performings.

The Asset is even thinking of crashing out a Philippines special, which, no especial Economist magazine has done in the last few years as Britain was being harassed by foreign investors in favor of the other regional capitals.

## $10 cheaper

THOS aren't full and Christmas holiday tickets to see Uy and Canadian cities are actually lower by $16 from last year's similar fares, this was clarified by Northwest Airlines marketing manager Bert Cadapan.

The price reduction was being introduced despite former high crude oil prices, Cadapan said, in reaction to Pinlac's columns.

Northwest, considered the industry benchmark for US-bound flights out of Manila, last week announced a $699 round trip economy fare to the West Coast and a $799 similar fare to the East Coast.

## Short takes

✦ FORMER Secretary Delia Albert will be appointed ambassador to a key European country or even the Philippine Mission to Geneva should the plan to transfer Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo to Duke Bears pull through.

✦ Metro Pacific director Alfredo Yao Jr. gov controls all Holdings that last week acquired a 20.33 percent stake of Metro Pacific Lanuza, the developer of Peninsula de Punta Fuego.

✦ The Philippine-Philippine thrift bank tycoons, Cojuangco, is the first savings bank to post an IPO as certified with the Bancnet online project that allows borrower transactions.

## Heard through the grapevine

KOLBOLISM bigwig Mariano "Mar" V. Ilustre is being asked by the Securities and Exchange Commission to explain why his newspaper, where he is both chair and publisher, has failed to submit since 1996 the company's annual general information sheet.

In addition, the Ilustre company is being asked why its crucial stock and transfer books for our basic registered sister it was founded in 1906, almost two decades ago.

*Email: victorayuyao@yahoo.com or text-mate_pagphotmail.com*

# Finance bucks moratorium ...

Turn to page B3

currency, and the consolidation of fiscal incentives.

These proposed measures are expected to generate an additional P60 billion in revenue a year, and help the government achieve a zero deficit over the medium term.

The budget deficit stood at P199.9 billion last year, and the government hopes to slightly trim it down to P197.6 billion by next year.

"The past years' budgets deficits, which resulted from higher expenditure and low revenue collection, had forced the government to resort to heavy borrowings. The national government's debt now stands at more than P4 trillion.

"The thrust of a fiscal crisis is really there, we badly need to address our budget problems," Tan said.


Enjoy mountain living at its PEAK

MANDALA RESIDENTIAL FARM ESTATE
A Filinvest Development

High mountain living, just 15 minutes away!

TIMBERLAND HEIGHTS
Your Natural Habitat.

Call 723-2323 or visit us at www.timberlandheights.com

FILINVEST
INVEST ON SOLID GROUND

On August 29, Sunday, 10am to 5pm, join us as we celebrate the Filipino fiesta spirit at the Mandala Residential Farm Estate and Banyan Ridge at Timberland Heights.

# SEC stops Iligan City gov't from bidding out NSC assets

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has barred the city treasurer of Iligan City from bidding out any of the assets of National Steel Corp., in connection with a case over the steel firm's tax issues.

The SEC has also stayed the execution of any tax lien of levy or sale against the assets of the steel company.

NSC told the SEC in a manifestation dated Aug. 10 that the city government of Iligan City issued an ordinance last Aug. 3 ordering the city treasurer to impose levy on all personal tax of NSC.

The city government of Iligan intends to collect from NSC real estate tax liabilities amounting to P926.96 million.

NSC had asked the SEC to direct the city government of Iligan, its officers and agents to cease and desist from issuing any warrant of levy, and from bidding out any of its properties.

In a cease and desist order dated Aug. 13, the SEC said NSC was under liquidation and as such, no claimant, including the government, could collect on its assets. Existing SEC rules on corporate recovery provides that no levy, disposal of properties for the purpose of liquidation will have to be approved by the SEC.

Upon the appointment of Lawyer Danilo Concepcion as liquidator, all assets of NSC were entrusted to him for the benefit of creditors and stockholders. Only the liquidator is allowed to dispose of any of the assets and to use the proceeds of such sales to settle claims against the firm.

The assets of NSC are also exempted from any order of garnishment, levy, attachment or execution, the SEC said.

The SEC said the city government of Iligan could not proceed to satisfy any tax claim against the properties of NSC.

In a separate order dated Aug. 13, the SEC also lifted a warrant of levy issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue against the assets of NSC.

The BIR wanted to collect P1.98 million worth of taxes from NSC. The SEC said that the BIR seized the assets of NSC by virtue of the writ and to collect on the liabilities.

The SEC directed the BIR to return said properties or to refund any amount raised from the sale of any of these assets.

## BSP OKs Smart's plan to issue new securities

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board has approved the issuance by leading wireless provider Smart Communications Inc. of P200 million worth of new securities to take out the debts issued by a Hong Kong-based affiliate Philippine Telephone Corp.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the MB gave its final approval last Thursday to the deal, which required its go-ahead since the new issuance would represent foreign obligations and could cause PLDT's creditors to exceed their dollar-coverage limit.

Reyes said the arrangement would resolve the debts owned by PHC to more than 10 banks, including 11 local banks as well as some offshore banking units and foreign bank branches.

Smart earlier offered to buy the debts of PHC and gave the affiliate creditor banks several options wherein the former's debts would be exchanged with its own securities instruments.

The final arrangement, Reyes said, would be the offering by Smart of new unsecured notes due 2007, 2008 and 2010.

"We've looked at the loan agreement," Reyes said. "This will improve the NPL (nonperforming loan) ratio of the banking system."

## *Taipan shares business tips*

TAIPAN Lucio Tan on Friday told aspiring businessmen not to be discouraged by unfavorable business conditions, saying such experiences would teach them valuable lessons.

In a message during an entrepreneur's forum sponsored by the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII), Tan recalled that his earliest attempts at business had failed. Undaunted by this early setback, he said the experience made him more determined to get back on his feet and start anew.

From his failed cars-watch venture to a modest diamond trading firm and, later, a tobacco company called Fortune, Tan said he slowly laid the foundation for his business empire. Now one of the biggest in Southeast Asia, the Tan Group has interests in tobacco, alcohol and beverages, banking and finance, construction, real estate, tourism and aviation.

Citing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as primary engines of growth, Tan told aspiring businessmen not to be timid despite their limited access to working capital and increasing globalization.

"Size is not important; what matters is strength," he stressed.

He encouraged SMEs, especially in the countryside, to build on their natural advantages. He said financial institutions like the Philippine National Bank (PNB) and allied bank offered special lending windows for small businesses and other start-ups.

To succeed in the global marketplace, Tan suggested the following strategies:

- Keep flat organizational structures, communicating on businesses that do not require many production;
- concentrate on markets that are near the Philippines;
- produce premium products that require light equipment; and
- take advantage of Filipino creativity and abundant human capital by engaging in labor-intensive enterprises.

## Insurance buyer's heavy taxes

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

*Rosendo C. Consunji*

WHEN President Macapagal-Arroyo said in her State of the Nation Address (Sona) that Filipinos were not paying enough taxes, she could not have been referring to the insurance buyer.

The insurance buyer is the most heavily taxed creature in the country.

If you buy an insurance policy on your car, you pay three separate taxes on the premium: 10 percent value added, 12.5 percent documentary, and 5 percent local government. That is a total of 27.5 percent on top of your premium. You are clobbered with the tax collectors on any insurance transaction.

If you buy a fire insurance policy on your house, you pay an additional 2 percent for earthquake. That brings the total to a whopping 29.5 percent on top of your premium. The same tax is charged whether you are insuring a Forbes Park mansion or a two-unit housing unit.

If any business is run more foolishly than the insurance buyer, I cannot help but feel a warming of the tax code. But, there surely is nothing like that you can buy when the motor shows that equal taxes slapped onto the purchase price.

Not only that, the agent or broker gets an average of about 25 percent in commissions. Thus, the government makes more money out of the insurance buyer than the agent or broker, who does all the work.

How much is the government's take? Based on the Insurance Commission's 2003 report (the latest available), I estimate that, in 2004, the total taxes slapped on non-life insurance buyers will reach P6.3 billion.

If you buy a life insurance policy, you do not pay the premium tax on the first year. This is because the taxes are built into the premium. But based again on the Insurance Commission's 2003 report, I estimate that, in 2004, the Gods slapped on life insurance buyers will reach P4.1 billion.

Which brings the total taxes on insurance buyers to P10.3 billion this year. That is nothing to sneeze at.

Why is the insurance buyer taxed so heavily? His sum is so vulnerable. If he takes out a loan, or opens a letter of credit, he is treated to buy an investment grade. Even if he does not borrow money, he insures his house anyway to avoid going bankrupt in case his house burns down. He also buys an insurance so he can sell his house, or move out from here into his wife and kids would end up in the poorhouse.

To add insult to injury, the Insurance Commission not used for the purposes for which the taxes are collected. The fire service tax was supposed to be for the purchase of fire trucks. Do you see any new fire trucks anywhere? The local government tax goes to where the policy is issued, not to where the building is located. If a policy is issued in Makati on a building located in Davao, the tax goes to Makati, not Davao. The tax thus is of no help to the town in Davao.

The biggest anomaly is the documentary stamp tax. It is supposed to be taxes on the document, but is based on the premium. A multi-page fire insurance policy can have a premium as low as P1,000, and the stamp tax is P225. A single-page marine insurance policy can have a premium of P500,000, and the stamp tax is P12,500. In Singapore, the stamp tax is one nation's ruling on matter how big the policy.

So, labor President goes around the country pleading for more taxes during the Bulong Bayan. I hope she does not mean the insurance buyer.

## Sluggish trading seen

Previous page B3

managers lured by new catalysts that could turn the Philippine bourse the 1,600-level," Grace Gamboa of 2Shades.com said.

Among the blue chips that announced positive results included Ayala Corp., which said it earned 90 percent more in the first half at P1.04 billion. Ayala International Corporate Treasurer Antonio Jose also said gross revenue in the second quarter rose 16 percent due to improved competitive offering income from foreign assets in Poland and Brazil.

SM Prime Holdings Inc., the country's largest mall chain operator, said second-quarter earnings was up 11 percent at P1.07 billion.

"The market, however, remains in consolidation. While earnings are improving there are concerns about the current trend of rising oil prices, above $40 a barrel, which may push inflation higher," BH Trade said.

It also cited fears of an increase in oil prices might curtail consumption and affect corporate profits.

The 120 Federal Reserve recently raised key interest rates by a quarter percentage point but BH Trade said this had been expected by the market.

"The market needs positive news to turn back attention to the market. Marine directions will be dictated by the movement of oil prices," it said.

Gamboa echoed the same sentiment, saying investors were waiting for key fiscal and monetary measures that could help soften the blow of increasing consumer prices.

"Oil and silver refining stocks that have enough cash board to support expansion plans, investors' radar screens might also be locked on the main beneficiary of these funds and post-venture schemes, as well as those that have placed additional income owners that can sustain expenditures for growth," she said.

She said the market might trade between 1,589.80 and 1,629. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

# Gov't urging big companies to go public

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AFTER the second listing of an oil firm on the stock exchange, investors are awaiting who will finally brave the market and make an initial public offering.

The Department of Energy is urging energy and oil firms to make their IPO's in the area.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said the government was urging the three energy company Shell Global Corp., a joint venture between the Melchorit Group and private power producer Meralco Philippines, and oil refiner Philippine Shell Petroleum Corp. to offer their shares to the public.

This was after the recent listing of oil exploration firm Petroenergy Resources Corp.

"I am pleased that Petroenergy had listed because it will encourage other companies to follow suit," he said.

Perez said the energy department was working with the PSE to encourage more companies to list given a clear view of the next six years under the current administration. "We believe it is a good time to get listed on the exchange," he added.

Investors in the PSE said the increase that the exchange had also involved event that the local unit of fast food giant McDonald's was launched building an IPO.

Golden Arches Development Corp. is the local franchisee of McDonald's has fast food chain in the country. Golden Arches president George Tang earlier said it was possible to conduct an IPO in the last five years but added that there was no specific plan yet as of this time. Golden Arches operates a new special P500 million to P1 billion to put up additional stores this year. As for, GADC operates 240 stores nationwide.

# Banks to yield dollars in forex mart

REYES

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MARGIN formed ng Filipinas has approved a new policy requiring banks to include foreign currency options in the computation of their net open foreign exchange position. This, in effect, would push the banks to unload their excess dollars in the foreign exchange market.

Rangkuti Siregar ng Filipinas Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Alberto Reyes said the panel's approval in the past few days was partly fueled by some banks' unloading of dollars in anticipation of a new circular on currency options.

A currency option is a contract which gives an investor the right to buy or sell a specified amount of currency before a specified period of time.

It is a form of derivatives, or hedging instruments, whose value is based on the worth of the underlying currency.

The BSP's policy-making unit, the Monetary Board, on Thursday ruled that the options would henceforth be included in the computation of the banks' net open foreign exchange positions, Reyes said.

"Some of the banks, when they include currency options [in the computation], will have higher overbought position, as they have to sell dollars to comply with the limit," Reyes told reporters.

Under the BSP's current rules, the banks' overbought, or long on dollar, position is limited to only 2.5 percent of their unimpaired capital, or $5 million, whichever is lower.

The restriction, which is adjusted by the MB depending on the state of the foreign exchange market, is meant to prevent speculative attacks against the local currency.

Prior to the 1997 Asian currency turmoil, the allowable overbought position was as high as 20 percent of banks' unimpaired capital.

"There's some risk involved in taking currency options, therefore, they should be included," Reyes said.

"So buyers of foreign exchange options, banks' purchases or sales depend on whether the price of an underlying currency is attractive enough for them to buy," he explained.

Reyes said this inclusion would address regulatory gaps "in a manner that is sensitive to risk management capabilities."

He added that the new ruling was in line with international practices.

A similar treatment on currency options is observed in other markets like Hong Kong, India, Thailand and Indonesia.

"This will also bring about more liquidity to the foreign exchange market," he said.

The inclusion of currency options in the banks' net foreign exchange position, Reyes said, should also bring more currency option transactions up in the spot.

A circular shall be issued to implement this new ruling very soon, according to Reyes.

The BSP deputy governor also said that the ruling did not mean that more derivative instruments would soon be included in the overbought position.

Reyes said only the currency option would have a significant impact on the foreign exchange market and should thus be treated as part of the banks' actual dollar holdings.

# Thai tax plan seen to hurt RP SUV exports

By Rocriel W. Domingo

THAILAND's new vehicle excise tax scheme could hurt the export of completely built up sports utility vehicles from the Philippines, according to an industry source.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the source said that Thailand would impose higher rates on imported "off-road purpose vehicles," or OPVs, this September.

These months after that, Thai officials will impose the same tax scheme on OPVs assembled in Thailand.

"There seems to a long time when you are exporting vehicles," the source said. "Paradoxically, the Ford Escape and the Mazda Tribute will be affected."

Thailand's new tax scheme is based on the simplified classification of vehicles: passenger vehicles, pickup trucks, vehicles with 11 or more seats, and hybrid vehicles. The four are OK.

According to the new classification, OPVs or sports utility vehicles with four-wheel drive systems, would be taxed as passenger cars.

OPVs used to be taxed at 30 percent, while cars were taxed at between 33 and 48 percent.

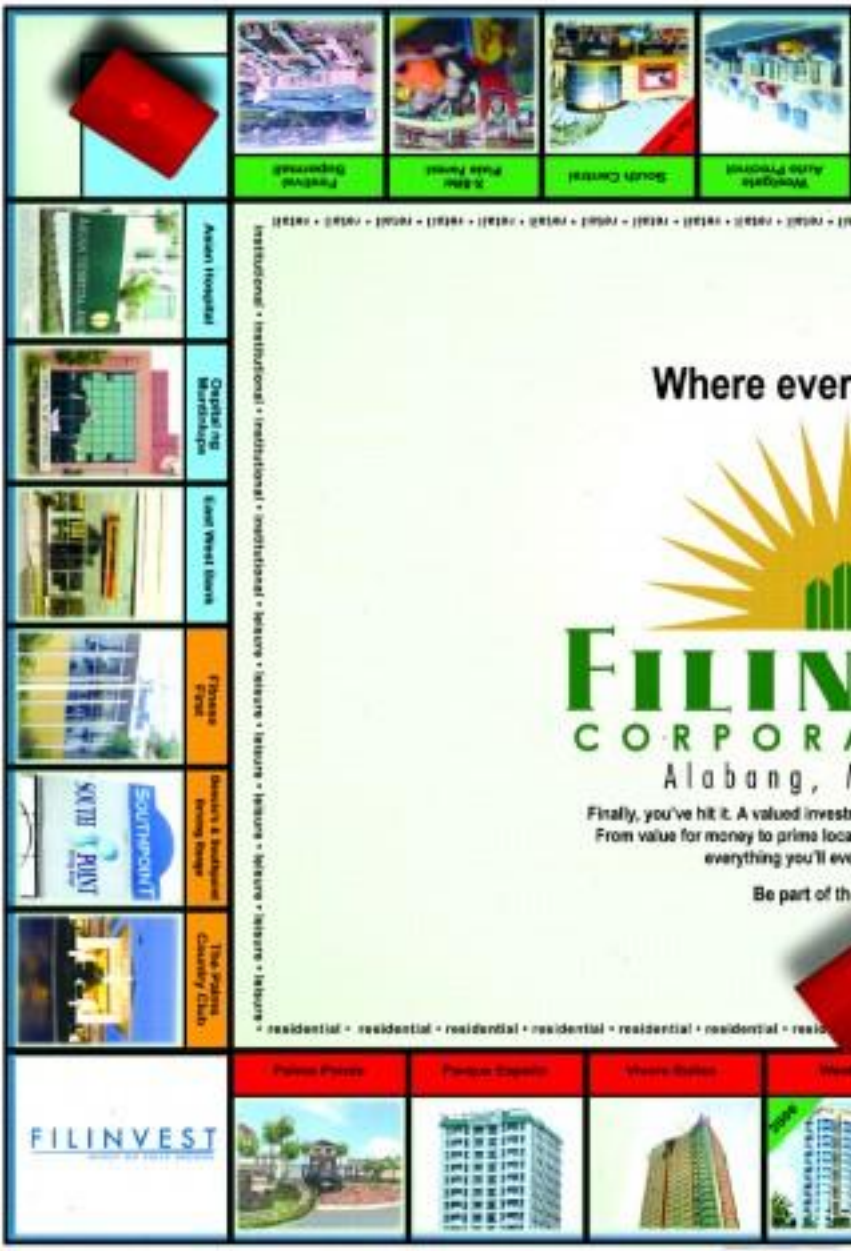
With the new tax scheme, Thai authorities hoped to encourage the use of vehicles with smaller engines.

In the case of the Ford SUV, excise taxes would go up from 20 percent to 35 percent for the 3.0-liter version, and 40 percent for the 2.3-liter version.

This development came about just as Ford Motor Co. Philippines was broadening its export market to include Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore.

On Friday Ford Philippines—the only exporter of completely built units—sent off its first batch of 180 CBUs to Malaysia.

As of the first half of 2004, Ford has exported 5,000 vehicles—4,500 of which were shipped to Thailand.



P8 BILLION A YEAR

# DOTC eyes revenue measures

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE TRANSPORT Department is working closely with other agencies to come up with measures to raise an additional P8 billion in revenue a year from transport-related taxes and fees.

Transport Undersecretary Arturo Valdez said the additional income would come from reforms in the operation of taxicabs, increase of vanity plates, data capture database of vehicles and imposition of road reliefes from economic fees paid.

Amado Lontoc, head of the Land Transportation Office, said that within this quarter, government agencies including the LTO, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the trade department would sign an agreement to plug revenue loopholes in the importation of used vehicles.

She said the measures would thrust an additional P2.5 billion to annual revenue for the government.

Valdez explained that the amount was based on the electronic sale of about 5,000 used vehicles from Subic.

Used vehicles are also brought in through the port of Cebu.

The DOTC is also counting on an additional P3.2 billion a year from requiring taxi drivers to issue official receipts.

Valdez said the receipts would enable the BIR to accurately impose a 12 percent gross receipts tax on taxi operators.

On the other hand, the issuance of third party insurance could also bring in about P1.5 billion yearly, while the augmented circuits of vanity plates would contribute an about P5.6 billion over the next five years.

The Department of Transportation and Communications brings in as much as P80 billion in revenues to the government.

Revenue Efforts, according to transport officials, are being pursued to help the Macapagal administration meet its budget deficit target of P185.8 billion this year.

The Development Budget Coordination Committee had asked agencies like the LTO and the Air Transportation Authority to increase fees to help the government generate more funds.

Last year, the DBCC collected about P7.1 billion in fees for revenue.

The Philippine Ports Authority collected P5 billion from terminal and wharfage fees and the Manila International Airport Authority earned P4.6 billion from terminal and other airport fees.

Agencies retain their revenues in the national treasury monthly and these are added to the national government's total collection.

# PNB to sell ₱10B in bad loans, assets

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank plans to sell about P10 billion worth of bad assets within the next two months, using the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework.

The bank, which tapped Siriam & Wong to evaluate its non-performing assets, is making moves ahead the deadline to qualify for tax relief and other incentives under the SPV Law.

"We're hooked in the assets and we're now awaiting board approval. Some P10 billion worth of assets have been identified for sale," R&E senior manager Ireneo Pascual said in an interview with the business.

BEC, which is also handling the asset sale of the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines, was confident that the two banks would meet the deadline to avail themselves of incentives under the SPV Law.

The SPV Law, which took effect in April 2002, intends to help banks get rid of their non-performing assets by relieving some of the taxes and reducing fees usually collected from the sale or transfer of assets.

The law waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and VAT (expected value added tax) and likewise reduced the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

The tax reliefs and other benefits are available only up to April 8, 2005 while the deadline to register with the BSP to take advantage of these perks will lapse in mid-December.

PNB is saddled with about P48 billion worth of bad assets.

In its management acknowledges that if the bank would not resort to a wholesale asset sale using the SPV framework, it would take a long time to clean up its portfolio.

Last year, PNB sold more idle real estate assets than any other of local property companies, posting a reward P24 billion in properties sales.

PNB, once the country's biggest bank, is headed for a second straight year of profitability and may find itself out of a 10-year asset rehabilitation program faster than expected.

Once the bank reorganizes its balance sheet, it plans to privatize the P6.1 billion in outstanding debt owed to the government. The government and the group of tobacco magnate Lucio Tan hold 45 percent each of PNB.

# Mine project named ecozone

By Christine A. Cayluan

THE $45-MILLION Rapu Rapu Polymetallic Mine Project is urgent Albay of Lafayette Phils. Inc. was named a special economic zone.

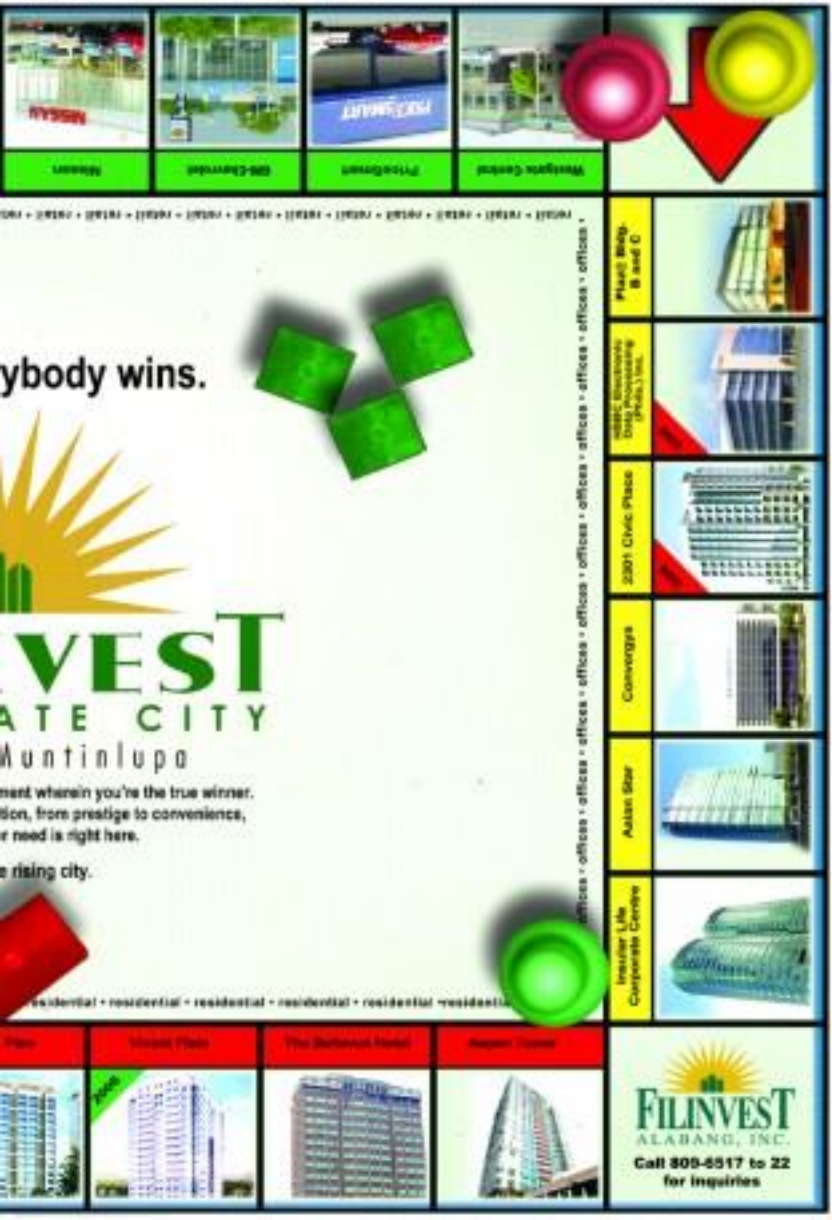
According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Mines and Geosciences Bureau, that would exempt Lafayette as a host project income tax holiday and exemption from paying duties on agricultural mining equipment.

However, Lafayette will be required to export at least 70 percent of its production.

Lafayette Philippines president Rod Ware said in an interview that the mining project was on schedule and would be completed next year.

The Rapu Rapu Polymetallic Project is one of the first mining projects to be approved after 35 years.

The mine was said to be capable of producing 37,000 tons of copper concentrates, 35,000 tons of zinc and 58,000 ounces of gold each year over six to seven years.



INFOTECH

Editor Leo Magno

# Payatas youth start virtual classes

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

THE SANDIWAAN Center for Learning in Payatas has begun developing an electronic learning course for the country's out-of-school youth.

The project entails digitizing learning modules from the Department of Education (DepEd), training teachers from the Philippine Society of Christian Education and donations of second-hand computers from Filipino-Americans abroad.

The project will have a pilot run by December this year and, hopefully, be deployed in Metro Manila early next year.

By the end of 2005, Sandiwaan expects to reach more than 50,000 out-of-school youth through their e-learning project.

Sandiwaan director Fr. Benigno Beltran, SVD, said they have acquired several dozen computers from PA spius societies in the United States and Germany.

"We are in talks with other groups to get us several hundred PCs," he said.

Father Beltran explained that their e-learning program only requires a minimum upfront set up in the classrooms/centers. Finally, a multimedia application that is becoming a popular choice among e-learning developers.

Father Beltran also said they have received donations to team up the project as well as some financial assistance from the Korean Information Technology and E-Commerce Council, now called the Commission on Information and Communications Technology.

The modules will be delivered via application service provider model where the modules can be accessed online via the Internet.

Sandiwaan will use 147 digitized learning modules from the DepED's Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE).

Resigues said they tapped a FU-Ipino group from the Michigan State University to digitize the BNFE modules.

Most of the BNFE modules are similar to the courses used by regular high schools but are designed for easy learning by out-of-school youths and special people.

Among the courses include basic to advanced English and reading comprehension, math, science, social studies and history. It usually takes two to three years to finish all the basic learning modules.

Like students who take the BNFE's traditional nursery students of Sandiwaan's project will also receive a diploma equivalent to that of a high school graduate.

"That diploma will help them in moving on to college or any vocational course. They can pursue their dreams of having a better life that they deserve," Beltran said.

## E-learning can fuel economic growth

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

THE ASIAN Development Bank (ADB) is pushing for the use of e-learning in developing Asian countries.

ADB vice president Geert van der Linden said using electronic methods to deliver education can provide a cost-effective solution to fill the geographical gap that is common among underdeveloped and developing countries.

"If properly harnessed, e-learning could be the tool that propels Asia's economies to new heights in the years to come," van der Linden said at the three-national Workshop on Improving E-Learning Policies and Programs held at ADB's Manila headquarters.

Van der Linden noted that e-learning can help people in rural areas access world-class education without having to move from communities.

The four-day workshop is organized by the Tokyo-based Asian Development Bank Institute and is being conducted in collaboration with the governments of Australia and the Republic of Korea, ADB, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, IBM, Microsoft and CompTIA.

Van der Linden noted that educational systems in many developing countries are not able to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the increasingly sophisticated global workforce, thus increasing the digital divide in education and in the labor force.

"Governments and their countries need to add value to their workforce through education if it wants to develop its human resources.

Statistical Profile, Capacity Building and Training Interventions ADB, said they is hosting other feasibility in terms of learning pace and content delivery.

Ambio also stressed the cost-effectiveness of e-learning over traditional methods since it can reach out to people in far flung areas who could not avail of attending class in another school away from their communities.

China, India, Fiji and the Pacific Islands, Mongolia and Sri Lanka already use e-learning to educate farmers, community leaders, government workers and students in far flung areas.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, e-learning is still relegated to basic school functions, though there are plans of expanding it to train farmers and small-to-medium scale businessmen.

Representatives were from 16 developing member countries attended the ADB workshops. It is trying to identify the policies needed to promote e-learning in these developing countries that are falling behind in terms of computer and Internet use.

## Company starts offering mobile phone insurance

By Alexander Villafania
Contributor

NOW even mobile phones can be insured.

Allianz d Insurance Corp. has started offering Asia's first mobile phone insurance service called TOUPhone.

The service works like a regular car or house insurance policy wherein a policyholder can claim a replacement unit of the same phone model.

This kind of service is available in the United Kingdom where new mobile phones are being insured.

Arnulfo Cambolieo, vice president for marketing development for allianz, said the service covers stolen phones and accidental damages to a unit. Moreover, she said the company covers all mobile phone brands and models that are available in the market.

"We replace stolen and accidentally damaged units. If a unit has been phased out in the market, the most closest model to that unit will be the one given to the owner," Cambolieo said.

She also said a replacement unit can be claimed three to five days after filing a report.

Cambolieo cited a report by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) that showed more than 17,000 incidents of phone theft in the Philippines.

To use the service, an owner has to apply through text message by sending the model number and brand in 2333 for Globe and Touch Mobile or 161 for Smart and Talk'N'Text. Afterwards, the owner completes an application form in Equitable PCI Rizmahbank and branded insurance branches nationwide.

The owner has to indicate the International

Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) in the application since this will be used to track down the stolen unit.

The service economically activates once the owner pays the annual premium, which depends on the phone model being insured. The premium ranges from P345 for a basic model such as a Nokia 3310, to P5,000 for a Sony Ericsson P900, one of the most expensive mobile phones in the market.

To prevent fraud among claimants, Cambolieo said they have measures that will establish the validity of the claim. These include filing a police report and being interviewed by an insurance agent.

"The kind of service can be subject to fraud. There are some who want to just replace their units and things such. On the other hand, we see there's a need for users to have their phones insured," Cambolieo said.

## Gov't mulls 'people's PC'

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva
Contributor

PHILIPPINE government is looking at copying Thailand's "PC for the people" program, one which packages affordable computers for the public.

The Philippine plan will, however, focus on providing affordable computers to public high schools Dan Ryan Espiritu PCI, according to Virgilio Peña, chair of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT).

The Thai government's program managed to bring the cost of a PC down to about 10,000 baht. Peña, however, noted that this price only covers hardware.

The Thai government recently signed a partnership with Microsoft Corp. to enable it to train Microsoft software prices, he said.

Peña disclosed he is currently in discussions with technology vendors like Intel Corp. to find ways of slashing the price of computers.

"I'm talking to Intel on a possible low-cost computer similar to what Thailand had done," Peña said.

He said that the Philippine government is looking at offering P15,000 computer for public schools.

Peña was, however, unclear whether government will use open source software.

Peña said the CICT will also talk to local customers on providing more affordable connectivity to public schools.

LIFESTYLE

MONDAY ARTS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY BIBLE • THURSDAY FASHION • SUNDAY SURPRISES

# Sri Lanka's 'Intramuros' faces development threats

The 16th-century Galle Fort nurtures 21st-century life. But real estate developers are driving out locals and residents

MERCY restored by the Netherlands government, a Dutch-era church stands prominently on the highest elevation of the fort.

**PRIDE OF PLACE**

*Augusto C Villalon*

HISTORICALLY, the island of Sri Lanka lay at the center of the maritime trade route between Arabia and China, strategically positioned off the Indian coast (now) along the ancient route of 16th-century European marine powers seeking the profits of colonialization and trade.

**Trade is not new to Sri Lanka. Especially to the island's earliest visitor, Ibn Batuta, the famous Arab navigator, landed Galle in 1344. In 1408, a visit by the Chinese admiral Cheng Ho was recorded.**

Sri Lanka's famous commodities attracted many traders. By the 16th century, Galle had grown into the island's chief port of call.

**It was not long before the Portuguese sailed into Galle for the first time in 1505. They later established the first fortification in Sri Lanka at Galle in 1588.**

At that time the Portuguese were masters of the seas and only he lifted against the enemy from the land. Therefore, the original Galle Fort was open to the sea and consisted of a well-and-three bastions on the land side, with a shallow moat over which a drawbridge controlled the only entrance.

**The Dutch engineers' the fort from the Portuguese in 1640, a time when the Indian Ocean was full of European nations competing for the riches of the east. They installed** Galle against sea raids from the British, French, Danish, Spanish and Portuguese. To guard their harbor at Galle against their enemies, Dutch authorities built stone defenses **and bulwarks facing the sea, completely surrounding Galle fort with fortification.**

However, Dutch engineers did not solely concentrate on military functions. Paying attention to improving the quality of life among the fort residents. They introduced an ingenious, intricate sewerage system (known) not by regular flushing with seawater lifted by a windmill.

In 1796, Galle Fort changed hands one more time. It fell to the British.

**Within the 90-acre area circumscribed by** the 14 bastions of Galle Fort remains the best-preserved fortified colonial town in South Asia.

Many of its government, religious and residential buildings belong to the colonial period. They were built by native craftsmen who adapted local technology to suit the taste of **their colonial masters. A new architecture style** that fused East and West evolved, ultimately developing into a purely Sri Lankan style.

**In 1988, the Historic City of Galle and its** fortifications were inscribed on the Unesco World Heritage List.

The Unesco citation reads "Founded in the 16th century by the Portuguese, Galle reached **the height of its development in the 18th century, before the arrival of the British. It is the** best example of a fortified city built by Europeans in South and South-east Asia, showing the interaction between European architectural styles and (South Asian) traditions."

A walk through Galle Fort brings the interesting comparison with our fortresses in Manila.

Both are 16th-century colonial models for **(illustrative construction) within 10 years of each** other by rival maritime powers Portugal and Spain.

**They were established as colonial outposts whose walls protected administrative centers** and a resident population. Obvious similarities include their location, size, scale and, in general, the street layout and local architecture.

The glaring dissimilarity between the two **places is the presence of life. Galle Fort teems**

**CHILDREN** take a break from playing on their stepped-out verandah to embrace into their 200-year-old home on a narrow street in Galle Fort.

UNLIKE other heritage zones it succeeds: museums of the past, the streets inside Galle Fort still hosts with everyday human activity.

A CLOCK tower provides the key visual identity to the Portuguese-built ramparts facing Galle town.

THE DUTCH added fortifications along the seafront as protection against raids from the sea.

# Sri Lanka's 'Intramuros' faces development threats

I decided to stop being fat.

Weight loss starts with you.

Your doctor can prescribe a serious weight management program for effective, long term weight loss. Ask your doctor about Cialis Rx.

Call 0800-332 (GMA) or 1-800-100-10-10-20 (Provincial Areas) now.

Call 8am Monday - Friday, 8am - 5pm

i DECIDE

A public service from Abbott Laboratories

Turn to page C2

with life. People continue to live there today.

On the other hand, residents have abandoned Intramuros. Hotels replaced town residences as it developed as a more tourist destination rather than retaining it as Manila's premier heritage quarter where the 22 or so primary colonials still date 1,000.

Galle Fort's buzzed with local life each time I strolled through its narrow streets. Businesses clattering for post-office noon in and out of government offices looking efficient and busy.

Residents went about their daily business, walking their children to neighborhood schools, shopping for provisions in the little shops within the walls, or stopping for a cold drink and a chat with friends in one of the many local places. Others went to worship in the temple or the church.

Not only are there few hotels in the Fort because the streets, which offer a glimpse into the cool interiors, there are also a number of small family-run shops that service daily life—small restaurants, food stores, bakeries, schools, pubs, shops, and a supply of whatever else a resident may need to see him through a typical day.

The Fort is a place set out with all of the amenities essential to the lives of residents. It is not reconfigured for tourist consumption.

There is a dimension of reality to the Galle Fort experience that made me realize I was part of the resident's daily life instead of being a paying ticket holder at a contrived cultural theme park packaged only for tourists.

You can come to devote to the Galle coast. It is one of Sri Lanka's primary tourist attractions. Beaches are crowded or "resort only" set aside for foreigners. Elegant resorts line the private waterfront but ancient hotels open to public beaches. There is something for everyone.

Despite strict regulations to protect the heritage architecture, physical and social changes are happening at Galle Fort. Taken by its timeless charm and finding developing country tax status prices very affordable, foreigners are buying many of the houses to use as holiday homes, leaving them empty most of the year.

Other heritage structures in the Fort have been converted into up-market bed-and-breakfasts, with the luxurious Amangalla Hotel chain opening when premises to be the ultimate facility set in a colonial building by the end of the year.

The foreign market raises real estate prices to a level that locals can no longer afford. **some have fears for the Fort, and change the quality of the local lifestyle. A resident** in the central area told her house told me that **some foreigners started buying out the houses** inside the Fort, **some locals have moved out** and the place is "not lively anymore."

Is Galle being colonialized again? What **di**rection the new lifestyle will eventually take **is open to conjecture. But could it develop in**to the future's greenfield tourist oasis in Sri Lanka like it did even the globe?

Gentrification happens when buildings in heritage or even modern neighborhoods are given a new life and upgraded to residences, upmarket restaurants and boutiques. There is a formula applied to gentrifying neighborhoods, resulting in a generic service provision area—The Docks in Sydney, SoHo in New York City, the Bastille in Paris.

If gentrification is allowed to happen, then what is necessary for the old Galle Fort?

The question is to ask in the end is: Who are we preserving heritage for? I hope the answer is that we are doing it for ourselves and not for the foreigners or tourists.

*E-mail the author at sphilson@hotmail.com*

ORIGINAL terra-cotta roofing tiles are carefully reused before they return to the roofs of a heritage Galle home undergoing conservation process.

# Rousing finale to romantic piano concertos duo

By Antonio C. Hila

PIANO soloist Santamaria with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maestro Eugene Castillo

When pianists Ingrid Isola Santamaria and Reynaldo Reyes embarked on a joint journey to perform romantic piano concertos more than a decade ago, they settled on only two pianos.

Santamaria was soloist and Reyes the "orchestra." Playing throughout the country and some parts of the globe, their repertoire consisted of best-loved concertos of the Romantic period that people know and loved. This year's journey brought Santamaria and Reyes not only to key cities in the Philippines but also in Thailand, Brunei and Micronesia.

Listening to these play requires a lot of imagination, for the Reyes, the rich orchestration as technically mastery cannot be fully secured with the score reduced to the second piano.

### Real orchestra

The occasional listener has to rely a lot on imagination to appreciate the work totally. However, with a master like Reyes on the second piano, the sound of an orchestra can easily be approximated.

But virtuosic pleasure is only achieved by listening to a concerto with real orchestra. This was shown in the last performance of the 6th Romantic Piano Concerto Journey that saw Santamaria playing with the country's premier orchestra, the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by its current music director and principal conductor, the young Eugene F. Castillo.

Venue for the performance was the Teresa L. Yuchengco Auditorium of the Ben Festiquet T. Yuchengco Hall, a classy addition to the De La Salle University campus on Taft Avenue. Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco, chair of the Yuchengco Group of Companies that sponsored the season, welcomed the guests.

The auditorium was full from the orchestra to the balcony with students not only from DLSU but also other universities and colleges in Metro Manila, members of the diplomatic corps, teachers, professionals and music lovers.

Reyes, in his brief introductory remarks, correctly said romantic-era, as a period in music, was the breakdown of traditional forms to give way to a more subjective, emotional musical statement. This period in the 19th century saw musical expression in rich sonorities, the expansion of the orchestra, and the rise of virtuosity.

The selection of Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky, Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18 and Concerto in B-flat minor, Op.2, respectively, are well cast in that mold. More than technical proficiency and finger dexterity, the concertos demand intense sensitivity and warmth of feeling to bring out their liveliness despite repeated performances.

### Sublime performance

Happily, Santamaria refused to be typecast. She avoided playing trendy and performed ruthlessly moving hard-hit play from pieces for the 8th time, I say that her approach was convincingly dynamic. Each time, she played the pieces with gusto and refinement.

There was no complaining her other dexterity in her playing that brought much integrity to it. She was conscious that she was playing with an orchestra and was in close rapport with the conductor. Together, they brilliantly brought out the magnificence of the romantic spirit.

In the Rachmaninoff concerto, Santamaria and Castillo managed a towering feat to the composer's ardent musicality that hovered throughout. Indisputably, this was at its height in the adagio sostenuto, the second movement that was the crowning glory of the entire work.

The theme was adopted for the popular song "All by Myself." The audience, dominated by the young, was in disbelief that such a classical piece could become appealing.

In this piece, the dialogue between the piano and the strings resounds the end note poignantly carried out. There was no appeal to sweetness, only an honest-to-goodness expression of lyrical consistency.

When the third movement was sounded, the older members of the audience recognized the familiar strains of "Full Moon and Empty Arms" that merge Hollywood some five decades ago.

In the Tchaikovsky work, Santamaria simply showed a Laitian virtuosity, especially in the fiery pastoral octaves in the first movement and the cadenza itself. Castillo, who showed much confidence, was as dependable as he was in the Rachmaninoff spot.

Together, pianist and conductor created lusty tones and arresting rhythms, with the virtuosic effects brilliantly executed. There was no slackening of pace, especially in the third movement that spun off at allegro vivace. Mote Bieger deservedly drew me give justice to the piece's rhythmic vitality and inner-most grandeur.

The older members of the audience also recognized the first movement, incorporated in the 40s hit "Tonight We Love."

Antonin Dvorak's two Slavonic Dances appropriately opened the concert and prepared the audience for the listening. Incidentally, the world marks the centenary of the death of the Czech composer this year.

There were much substance in the musicians' playing. The conductor gave meticulous attention to ensemble playing, to bring out more voicing spirit from melodic statements. With a young, dynamic conductor, people can have a more grand time listening to the PPO now.

For encores, Reyes joined Santamaria for four numbers from Brahms' "Hungarian Dances." Ambassador Yuchengco handed Santamaria a bouquet, and Rev. Gregory Wright, FSC, gave Castillo and Reyes each a lot of sampaguitas at the end.

AMBASSADOR Alfonso T. Yuchengco and Ingrid Santamaria

REYNALDO Reyes, PPO conductor Eugene Castillo and Ingrid Santamaria

Thursday 8pm + Pagkatapos ng Pilipinas + ABC

NIÑOS INOCENTES?
Bata pa, kriminal na

plus +
TANONG NG BAYAN
1-woman policy:
Uubra ba sa mga machong Pinoy?

Hatid sa inyo ng ating kabalitaan ngayong linggo, Inquirer Columnist,
Rina Jimenez - David

THIS WEEK'S EPISODE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY

HOPE

INQ7 TV
Iba'ng Dyes Na!

TEXT: SIGTV<SAGOT> <PANGALAN> <EDYUKASYON PROBINSYA> SEND TO 2910. BUKAS PEARLESS KAYA MANG LAKI MEDYO MAHIRAP KA? MEDYAN KA BA, MAHIRA

CECILE Lisaab in Cultus Cave in Cagayan last year

# City of true-blue music lovers

By Pablo S. Tariman
Contributor

WOFF do Manuel Luna, violinist brother of Juan Luna who received a degree in music in the Madrid Conservatory in 1879; Imus M. Asuncion (the song Schumann's "Widmung" and conducted a Bach cantata with excellent results in the San Agustin Church in the late '90s); conductor Redeemer Romero, soprano Evelyn Mandac, Ricardo Cabisu, Jovito Cadiz and Nina Lyndonia; and music lover Noel Sellano and Leonard de la Cruz have in common?

Well, they are true-blooded Bacoleos from Bacoor Norte, Bacoor Sur, Pangasinan, Imbabu and Cagayan, not nearby in that order.

I thought of the Bacoleo artists as I once again traveled Tuguegarao City in Cagayan last Aug. 9 to hear the music of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin and Schumann through young prize-winning pianist Oliver Salonga, who has now performed twice in St. Paul University's (SPU) Mother Madeleine Hall.

The concert was well-received, the more gave Salonga a standing ovation after the encore, Rachmaninoff's "Etude in C."

Helping make the outreach concert possible were now SPU president, Sister Remy Angeles Sorio, and Sr. Oscar Tachgian, vice-president for external affairs.

The Mother Madeleine Hall has perfect acoustics. We tested it during the Economic Convenor Journey of Ingrid Xilin Gamonarola and Reynaldo Reyes in 2001. The hall was not just piano-friendly but excellent as well for voice and flute as proven during the performances of Agustina de la Luna Ocero, pianist Najib Assaid and tenor Leonard de la Cruz. It was also ideal for performing ambience microphones.

One reason for returning to the place is the very receptive audience. Tuguegarao City always gives great performers standing ovations. They all loved the Tchaikovsky and Grieg concertos of Sarmiento and Reyes, the Chopin Scherzo of Salonga, the Spanish songs of de la Cruz and the Trinitario Ororon medley of Reyes.

PRO Cecile Licad, it was told replies in local pandemoniums and the pianist obliged with generous encores. A music-loving couple from Cebu, Ms. and Mr. Veronico Uan (the wife, the former Pilar Wong, was born in Tuguegarao), called Cagayan doubleday Rendezvous. Licad agreed after the concert and announced that I was being given a plaque of recognition for bringing Licad to Cagayan without any corporate sponsors.

I got the award from no less than Cebu Cardinal Ricardo Vidal and, upon learning that I depend on the generosity of strangers to finance concerts, I was given a cash award (the equivalent of a poor's contributor's fees from the heavens).

Not all my losing concerts are rewarded with cash awards. It got a plaque from the Atlanta governor for bringing classical music to his province) and this is not the reason I keep going back to Cagayan.

The province is a place to explore after the concerts. It has numerous attractions like the Callao Caves and the nearby river complete with flying bats. It took 288 perilous steps to get to the caves. I thought of singing here a performance of the Schubert Arpeggione sonata for flute and maybe a portable piano.

If, on the offchance I am able to make my fantasy a reality, Cagayanos will hear Schubert and Bach in Callao Cave in Cagayan.

HAIRLOU Shao Abayarath Licad (center) in native Cor a banca ride through Callao Cave River in Cagayan

### Here and there

Cellist Victor Michael Cos is busy in the Music Works Festival in Indiana. He will join a European tour of his school orchestra. He just played a movement from a Dvorak cello concerto with the festival orchestra as one of the winners of a concerto competition. Among the young cellists, only Cos has the talents, artistry and sensibility worthy of a future Fo-Fo-Ma.



CECILE Licad in Callao Cave in Cagayan last year

# Dancing their way to the Olympics

By Joyce C. Alcala

AT THE 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, not only the world's best athletes are showcased. Sharing the spotlight will be dancers from many nations, including the Philippines' Bayanihan National Dance Company.

The company has been invited to perform for the games' Cultural Olympiad called "Taldorcating Cultures" on Aug. 23-25.

"It's the cultural phase of the Olympics, more like a cultural olympiad," says Bayanihan's executive director Susie Moya-Benitez.

"We have entered our dances and musicians numerously since they joined the company, and for them to be asked to perform during the big event to represent the Philippines is an honor," she adds.

In Athens, the company will perform an hour-long show every day for three days, with a repertoire that includes 15 to 20 songs and dances.

Bayanihan choreographer Ferdinand B. Jose, artistic and executive director Isabel A. Santos, music director Mellen Isle Cruz and Ibrahim will be accompanying the 16 dancers and live music/ans on the trip.

### World-famous

Breathing new life to Philippine folklore and traditional rituals through dance and music has made the Bayanihan National Dance Company a world-famous cultural institution.

Like athletes, it takes rigorous training, constant discipline and years of hard work to excel in the art form the Bayanihan is now bringing to the Olympic games.

Before Athens, however, the company will be performing in Budapest on Aug. 12 to 22 in the Grand Folklorista Folk Festival, one of the biggest folk festivals in the world, organized by the Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d'Arts Traditionnels in Hungary.

"We have been rehearsing every day," says Jose. "In fact, for the month of July, we didn't even accept bookings. After we arrived from Monaco (last June), we started rehearsing for Greece right away."

The Monaco stint had the company performing in a fashion and dance show wearing the collections of Alfonso "Pao" Carino-o, Ben Farasino and Dita Ilumbe-Ong.

"Pao of the dances and songs performed there [in Monaco] will also be performed in Athens," says Jose. "But of course we've prepared several new ones for this crowd."

"Our performers perform by reasons. We've trained our dancers to do diverse tasks. They sing, they dance, they play the instruments... It's always been part of their training," he adds.

### Classic suites

Santos, who has been with the company since its founding in 1957, enumerates five classic dance suites included in the show: the Cordillera and Mt. Province dances, Spanish dances (also known as Fiesta Filipina), Muslim dances, tribal dances and the rural countryside suite.

SIMONEL

IMAGINO

The Cordillera and Mt. Province dances are derived from the customs, rituals and love of the pagan folk in the mountains of Northern Luzon. The accompaniments were nose flutes, bamboo guitars, gongs of various sizes and shapes, drums and wooden sticks for instruments.

The Spanish dances depict the pervasive influence of four centuries of Spanish influence on the Filipino character, while the Muslim suite showcases the customs and culture of the Muslims in Mindanao, with touches of Arabian and Indo-Malayan influences.

The Rural Countryside suite is based on dances of people in the ever-growing countryside who express their joy in work and genuine love for a good harvest. The Tribal dances celebrate community rituals, victories, feasts and commemorations.

According to Jose, he has done innovative variations on several dances and combined a few choreographed pieces in the 18-minute portion of their hour-long presentation.

He has changed the choreography of singkil, for instance. "Before, choreographers based the dance purely on the storyline, but I've made my choreography tell the actual story through dance," explains Jose.

"So I'd think it will be perfect used in Athens for that 18-minute portion," he adds. "We have a dance combination, all Muslim pieces, which we call 'Voyage to Love and Peace,' which combines singkil, vinta, kaulinan and kuntao."

"Kuntao is a martial arts dance, like Tai Chi, but it's Muslim martial arts through and through. We asked the dancers to study during the Muslim pieces para hindi masayado ang galaw ng."

"I have also changed the choreography of [the dance] Salidsalid," Jose continues. "It's a Chinese-influenced dance [usually] to drive away evil spirits. It's supposed to be a dance by a boy and girl, but now we've decided to put in an all-male cast to give more power to the dance."

Helping boost more power to the Bayanihan ejercitants are the colorful costumes, props and instruments, which are an vital a part of the entourage as the dancers.

"We bring everything wherever we go, even the bamboo poles," says Cruz. "Unless one dances performs traditional, folklore pieces, people usually look for those things."

If dance saves Olympic gold medals for countrymen and pride to cool's culture, the Bayanihan certainly would have won dancefly now.

BANSA Salidsal

# *Ballet Philippines tours China*

"SAONG Silangka"

BALLET Philippines (BP) will participate in the 6th Asian Arts Festival on Aug. 18-29 in Beijing and Chanchung, China.

Ballet Philippines is the only dance company in Southeast Asia with an impressive repertoire of over 100 works accumulated over the past 25 years. It is now ready celebrating its emerald season.

BP in China will show a highly charged repertoire of contemporary dances that have earned local and international praise for the company. The repertoire will include Agnes Locsin's "Space," "Tausug Silangka" (awarded the silver in the Paris International Modern Dance Competition) and "Mutations" (which won the silver medal in Japan), and Modern Dog master "Paduay."

BP executive director Ida Nelson-Lucila and sales and marketing director Monica Gaston will head BP's 12-man team.

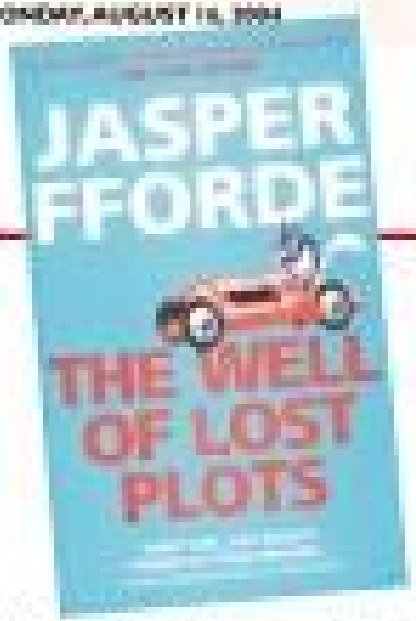
The Asian Arts Festival was first held in 1998 with the support of the China Ministry of Culture. For this year, some 30 arts groups from nearly 20 countries will participate. The theme is "Bring Modern Asian Arts."

The BP tour of China is made possible by a grant from the Philippine Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

"HOBOSHES"

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE




# All's well when reading 'Well'

"The Well of Lost Plots"
By Jasper Fforde
New English Library, London, 2003, 384 pages

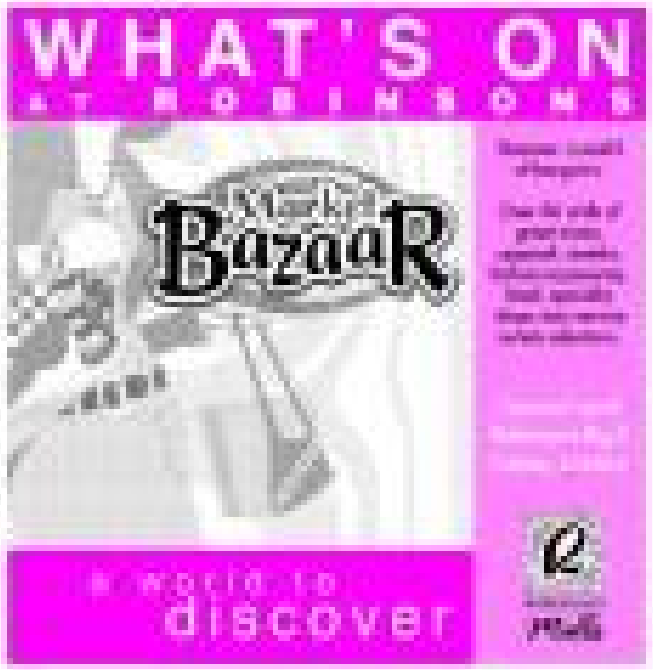
By Raul S. De Rara

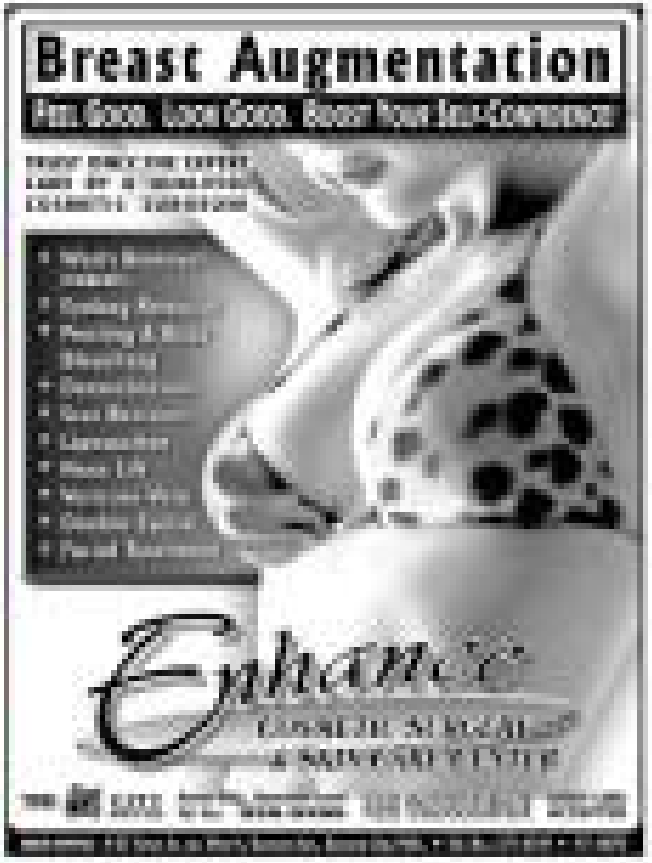
"BOOKS are magic," says one of the endearing characters in Jasper Fforde's "The Well of Lost Plots." And it's not there is a writer out there today who embodies this statement in both style and substance. It is the intrepid Mayor Fforde. That's because "Well" is the third in his Thursday Next series, perhaps the most imaginative and enjoyable series of novels in the fiction market today.

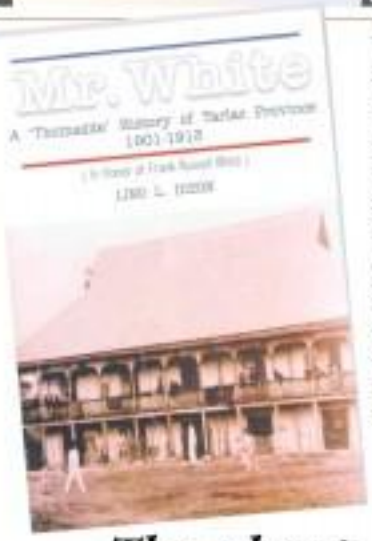
**Review**

From "The Eyre Affair" to "Lost in a Good Book," Fforde introduced us to a parallel London where Thursday Next is a sizzling literary detective enamored with Spotlight, but soon she discovers herself in a totally other world, where people can literally jump into books and even communicate with the events contained therein.

At the end of "Lost," Next had the misfortune of having her husband Landen eradicated and was on the run from the cutthroat Goliath Corporation. The poignant prologue here does little to take things in the Bookworld and begin from






The book leads not only to the identity of a friendly ghost, but also to the American legacy of public education in the Philippines

# The ghost of Mr. White

"Mr. White: A Thomasite History of Turban Province, 1901-1913"
By Lisa Hirsh
Center for Tarbaquito Studies, 2003. 198 pages

**By Jose Victor Z. Torres**
*Contributor*

LISA Hirsh's "Mr. White: A Thomasite History of Turban Province, 1901-1913" is the story of the author's search for her maternal ghosts.

For the ghost of Frank Russell White, an American teacher in the Philippines who rose to become the top education official in the land.

For the ghosts of the Thomasites, young and idealistic Americans who took their chances in living in a country thousands of miles away from home and teach the "American way" to colonial subjects.

For the ghosts of buildings, monuments, and ideals lost through time—the legacy of public education in Turba.

And, for the ghost of a history of education that still awaits a full blossoming on the fertile soil of history and ideas.

Hirsh's search for Mr. White began with the tale of a ghost with the same name. This restless spirit was said to have haunted the public schools in Cosmopolitan, Turba. It wasn't long before the tale became one of the many tales of the unknown in the province.

By following this ghost story, Hirsh was not led only to the identity of Mr. White, but also to the story of an American from Illinois who created a legacy of public education in the Philippines.

Frank Russell White began his teaching career in the public schools of Turba. He built the Philippine's first public high school in that province. There, from his next position as Turba's first division superintendent, he became the director of the Bureau of Education. It was through his offices that vocational and industrial education played a large part in the public school system during the first quarter of the 20th century.

In the end, it was his indefatigable work that destroyed his health, leaving him dead from pulmonary tuberculosis at the age of 37.

But Hirsh's book is not just a biography of White. The ghost story also led him to the story of a province on the throes of change under a new colonial master.

Like the other provinces in Luzon, Turba in the early 20th century was recovering from the Philippine Revolution and the Filipino-American War. Occupying the province, the American found themselves dealing with the restless Spanish colonial society. Religion still played a part in politics and the seed of the prime against the Protestant missionaries was still followed.

It was, at first, difficult for the missionary-minded Americans, but in the end, they overcame the "Spanish" obstacles and made Turba a model of American colonial education.

## Forgotten

"Mr. White" is also appreciated as a work dwelling with the lowlands and triumphs of the forgotten stalwarts of Philippine public education—the Thomasites.

Of course, there were books published (or reprinted) during the centennial celebrations of the Thomasites in 2000. But Hirsh's book is unique for it is an interesting story of one Thomasite in the locality where he would live and die.

Thus, we have White's story narrated with Turba's social, cultural and educational features. Hirsh's mention of the founding Lions, Rotarians and the numerous nationalities make the reader realize that places like Turba had special names for buildings, people and places which, for bureaucrats, are just names in their official reports.

The book is also excellent contributor to Philippine local history. "Mr. White" is the story of Turba and its growth from a Central Luzon sugar bowl to a booming industrial asset of the American colonial economy with the help of education and religion.

The book is Hirsh's eighth local history of Turba and Pampanga. It shows the growing interest of history scholars in the stories of the towns and provinces of the Philippines. This encouraging trend has contributed a lot in the realization of the Filipino identity. Hirsh represents it best.

"Thus, for Mr. White appearing as a poltergeist to the garden house and the Home Economics Building of a public school in Cosmopolis, Turba: should not be taken simply as an unfortunate accessory or really dismissed as a folktale. It could be the augury of a more sensible, if not, reassuring vision.

"In the face of the fact that present schools are losing their sacred and epistemic foundations, who knows, it could be a reminder of the path taken by a teacher from a bygone era that sought to provide answers on what he believed were the genuine forms and meanings of a truthful education, even though it was merely in the hunting of a dream. Unfortunately, then and now, it could still be a path not to be merely taken."

# Book of humor essays out

MILFORD Publishing, Inc. has released "Misadventures of a Disorganized Young Woman" by Charlene Fernandez.

The short, funny essays in this book are all about the mishaps that befall an ill-starred, bumbling and accident prone young woman, told in the style of Internet blogs.

Fernandez teaches English, Creative Writing and Literature at UP Diliman, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in Creative Writing and an MA in English Studies.

Author Magbuyan designed the humorous cover and illustrations of "Misadventures" in his comic book style.

The book is available at all National Bookstores, PowerBooks, Books for Less and other leading book stores nationwide at P380 per copy.

Call or fax 7234451, or e-mail milfordpub@.net.ph.

# Discounts and promo

NATIONAL Book Store is holding its annual Cut-Price Plus book sale until Sept. 5.

Customers will get great discounts on selected books and other reading materials. They also get book coupons for every minimum purchase.

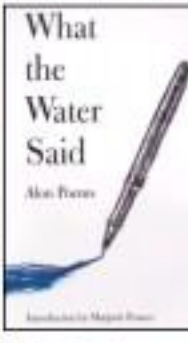
The minimum purchase of P1,000 to P2,999, buyers get a P100 book coupon; a minimum purchase of P3,000-P4,999 entitles buyers P500 worth of book coupons; a P5,000 and up minimum purchase grants customers P1,000 worth of coupons. All purchases must be in a single receipt. Customers can claim these book coupons by presenting their receipts to the customer service counter at the branch where the purchase was made.

Customers who make a P5,000 purchase in a single receipt or accumulated receipts from the same branch can also get the chance to win any of the following prizes: four P25,000 worth of gift certificates, two P50,000 worth of gift certificates, and one trip for two to the Book Expo America in New York City in 2005. The prize includes airfare, hotel accommodation, and entrance to the Expo.

**ERLINDA K. Bautista's book, "On the Edge of Heaven, Book 2" is now off the press. It picks up from where Bautista's first book left off — relating the author's experience upon her husband's (Photo from Bautista's) death, focusing on the widow's disappointing encounter with our judicial system. Included are relevant documents and letters that provide mind-spinning results so her story. Call 8330010 or 4760161, or fax 4161019.**

**NILO MAAM Cards presents divine inspirations booklet here through "Morning Light Reflections Booklet." The handy and elegant meditation booklet comes in three soul-refreshing designs for only P75 each. It holds 10 timely Bible verses, as well as an inspirational bookmark inside. Exclusively available at National Bookstore.**

# New poetry collection




THE UNIVERSITY of San Agustin, Iloilo City, through its publishing arm, Libro Aguatino, will launch a new poetry book, "What the Water Said: Alon Poems," on Sept. 2, 6 p.m., at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Bulwagang Para Isinasang Alagad ng Sining (4/L, CCP Main Building).

The book features poems by Ronald Baytan, Ernesto Carmelino, Ramon Cruz, Alice Sun Ong, Vicente Garcia Groyon, Jill Bonnie Hildawa, Shirley Lua and John Jerrod Tordesillas.

These writers, drawn together by a common love of words and language, meet regularly as the Alon Collective, each one bringing a new poem in progress every time for the other members to critique and discuss.

"What the Water Said" contains Alon poems completed between 1999 and 2002. "In many ways, the book is a testament of how a writing community is created and how each member brings a shared vision to fruition," says poet Mauricio Domon in the book's introduction.

Call 0332702 or 0918-9331304.

# All's well when reading 'Well'

ing as a member of Antidotion, the unit that polices what happens inside books.

In here, this point that "Well" begins, with Nora, together with her similarly pregnant pal dodo Didrick, settling into a new identity through the Character Exchange Program in a terrible detective novel called "Cavendish Heights," which is in danger of being demolished. That particular book resides in the Well of Lost Plots, the place where all books come from, where ideas are refined, subplots are constructed and lines are polished. Living with Retinoil (their actors, him), who is as freelancer ...In other words, a real person—think there are many differences involved when one resides in the Well.

And this is where one can begin to see the immense ingenuity of Fforde. "The relative absence of breathless sex the first and most notable difference to my daily timetable. Inside books, characters are sexless and therefore human frequently, as do lunches and afternoon tea, probably because they offer more opportunities to further the story. Breakfast wins all. But sex is missing. There was a peculiar lack of tension, ambiguous subtext, odors, books, animals, underwear, smells, haircuts and, strangely enough, minor illnesses. If someone was ill in a book it was either terminal and dramatically unpleasant or a mild head cold... there wasn't much to between."

But there is much in between the cover and back page of "Well". Indeed, Nora's quest to reconstruct her husband takes a back seat to her training as a Jurisfiction operative under the wing of the bedridden Miss Havisham of "Great Expectations" fame. But there are new dangerous developments in "Well." Town at a new operating system for all books is being introduced, rumored to killing inconvenient agents, one of their own and Nora may indeed be, well, next. Meanwhile, Mary finds her memories under attack by a mindworm unleashed by Savant Shoppegirl, a renegade agent of a villain Nora had dispatched. The worm was slowly eating through Nora's memories, deleting everything, most especially Nora's memories of her missing husband—unless they find some way of stopping it, of course.

But beyond the gunfights and amorous escapes (there are a ton in this book), there are the many marvels of the world of "Well." There is a multitude of elements Nora has to deal with. Life with two genres (Inconvenience brings waiting for rules in books), a job working at the local bandstand of King Solomon's Judgement, a cricket organized by mystery rhyme characters determining the vacation date, an anger management session with the residents of "Wuthering Heights" and constant interruptions by the Rhetoric Bear "Macbeth." Seriously.

And humorously as well. If it were at all possible, Fforde actually parks more puns "Well" than he did in the previous two novels. Aside from cameos by everyone from Count Dracula to Quasimodo, a proud nanodrachen he took inhabitants as well as crossed-species abominations, "Well" features the most expansive and humorous exploration into Fforde's bookworld, all of it in service to the irresistible plot built into the book, to great ruse. Next are note the conspiracy at Jurisfiction and meet per her own life—and the fictional Nora of the characters working with her—right. Through whimsical and occasionally emotive, Fforde doesn't go easy on Nora. Our long-suffering protagonist loses friends and colleagues permanently this time and, by book's end, faces even greater challenges and responsibilities than ever before.

With "Well" as the best example so far, Fforde's Thursday Next series gives readers the single most delightful and ingenious take on the inner workings of writing since Salman Rushdie's "Haroun and the Sea of Stories." And the good news is there's even more coming. "Something Rotten," the fourth installment in Fforde's innovative progression, has just arrived in local shores, ready for readers to jump right in.

Before getting to that lamp-lit, bookish treat, readers and lovers of the word should experience the verne-dinary joys of Jasper Fforde's "The Well of Lost Plots," a rousing novel that celebrates books and the power of imagination, from the third-third and defend every fictioneer, no matter how poorly written, against oppression. I shall not think from my duty, nor use my knowledge of position for personal gain. Be sure to attend to me by the Council of Genres or Text Inviolate General must remain secret until, in the service, and I will do all I can to maintain the power of text, unwilling within the minds and hearts of the readers."

*Available at Fully Booked.*